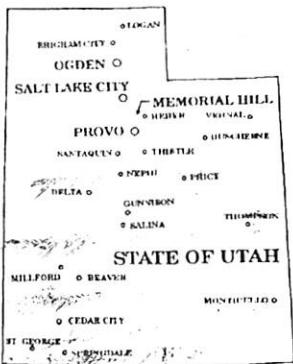


## AFTER OURAY

The five children of the memoirs grew up to have interesting careers as have been highlighted in Addendum A.

A point of pride in the professional life of Leigh Block Turner was the architectural design of the monument pictured below which was erected on Memorial Hill in 1928 by the Wasatch County, Utah, commissioners to honor county residents who has served in any war fought by the United States.

Addendum C gives details on the monument and how it has fared in the years since.



Picture taken in early 1930's.  
(Block, Turner collection)

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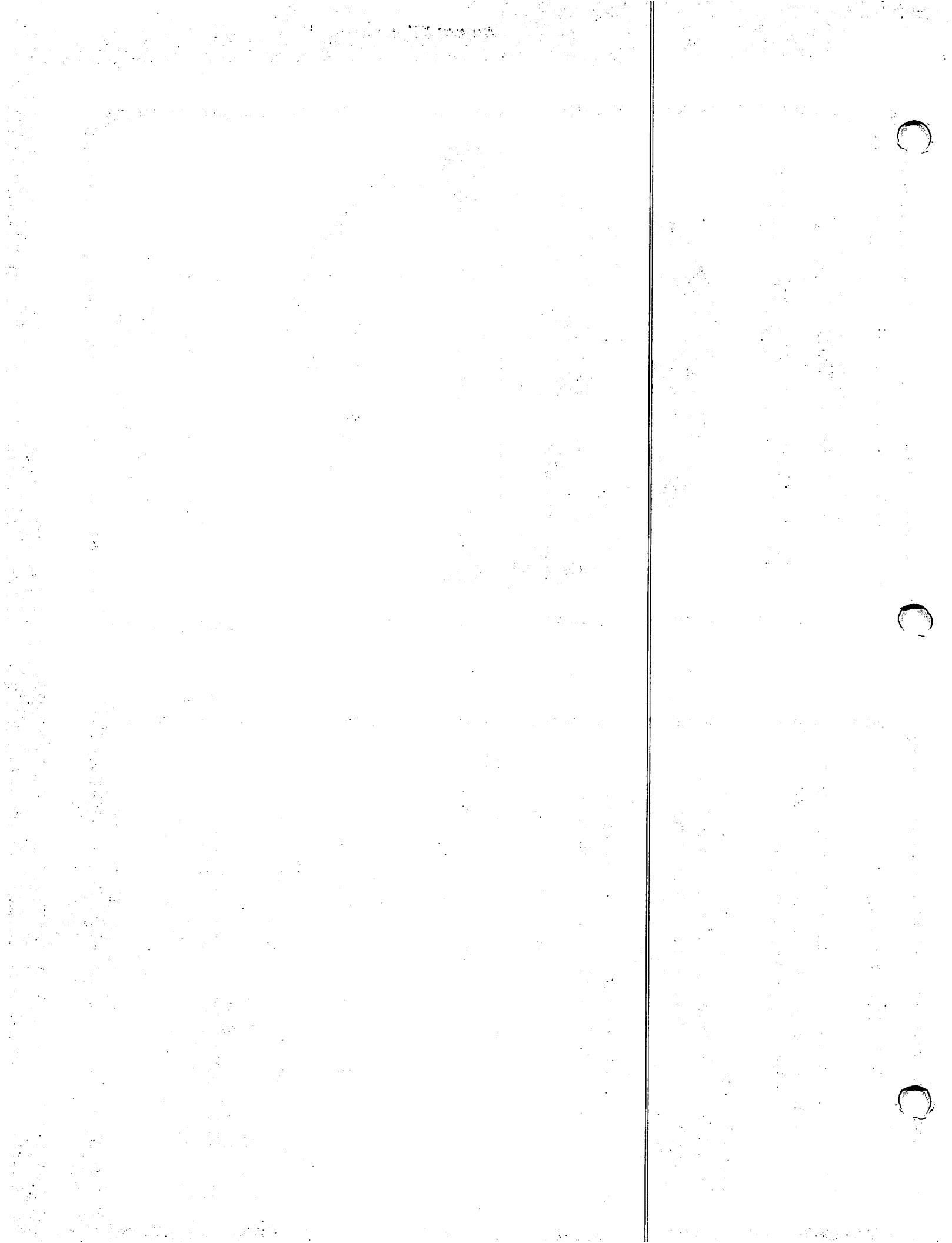
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*"An Intimate and Appealing Picture of Early Ouray"*

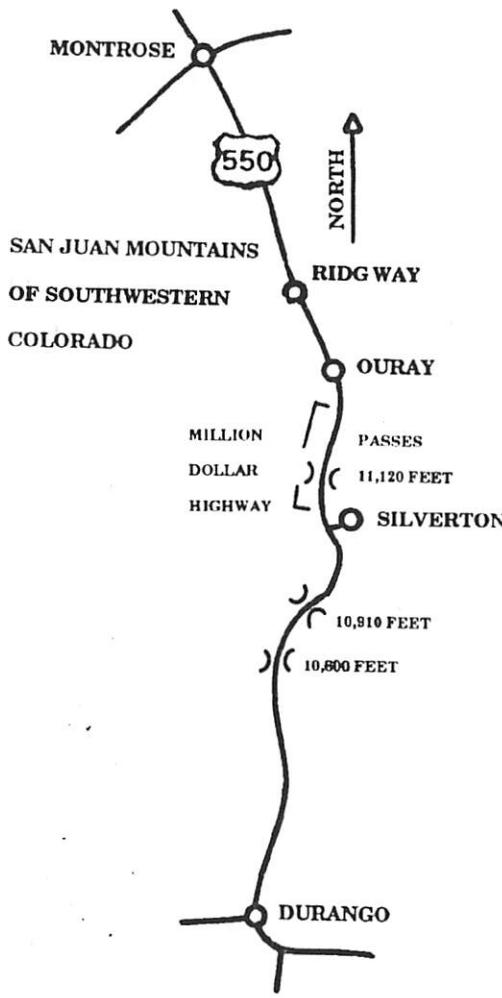
## MEMOIRS OF A HAPPY CHILDHOOD



By Leigh Block Turner  
Compiled and Augmented  
by William R. Turner



William R. Turner  
1800 Gayle Drive  
Silver Spring,  
Maryland 20906



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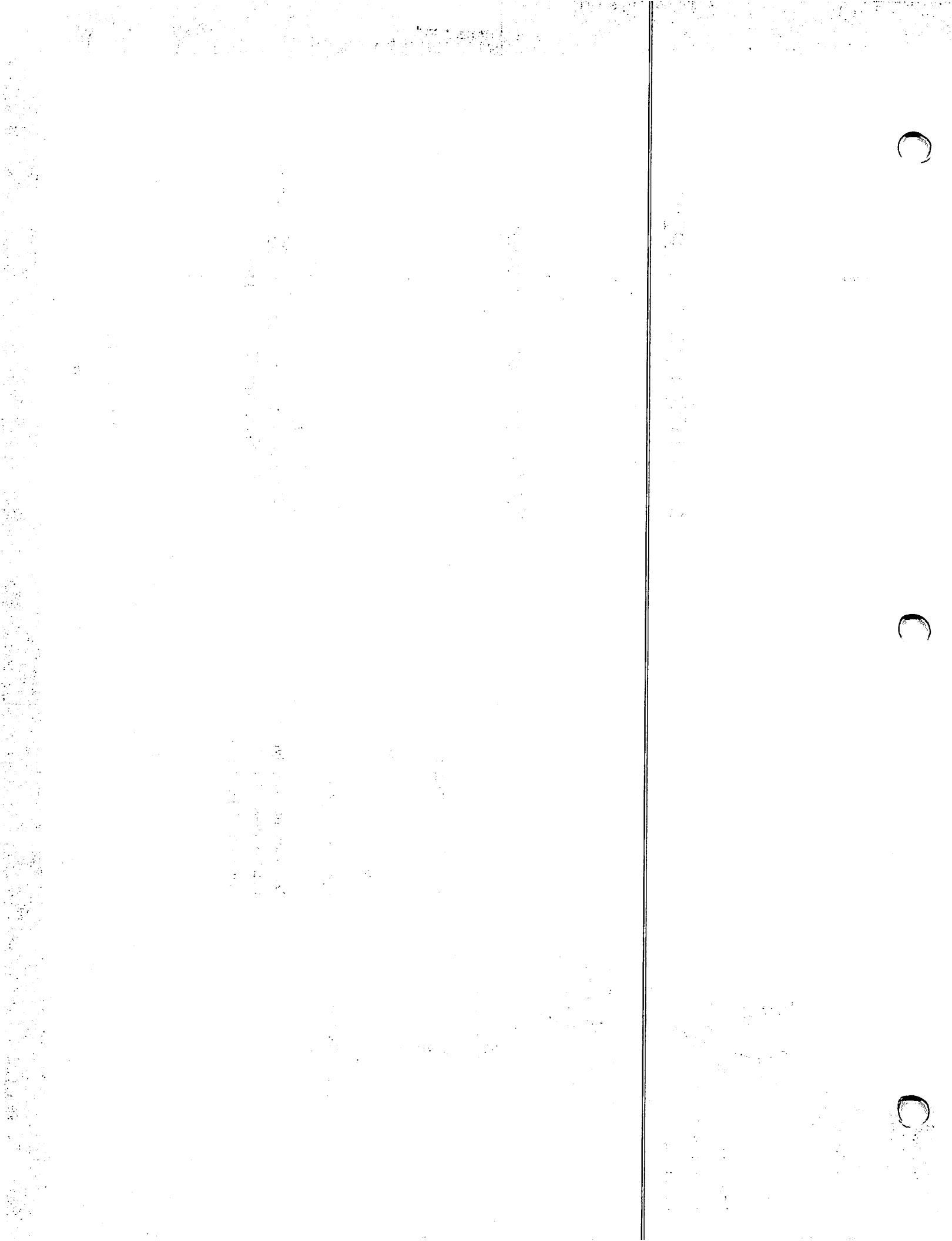
Leigh and her dog, Gyp, in  
October 1888. (N. C. Brace  
using a "Kodak® Camera")

# MEMOIRS OF A HAPPY CHILDHOOD

By Leigh Block Turner

*William R. Turner*  
Compiled and Augmented  
by William R. Turner

A Wrybolot Publication



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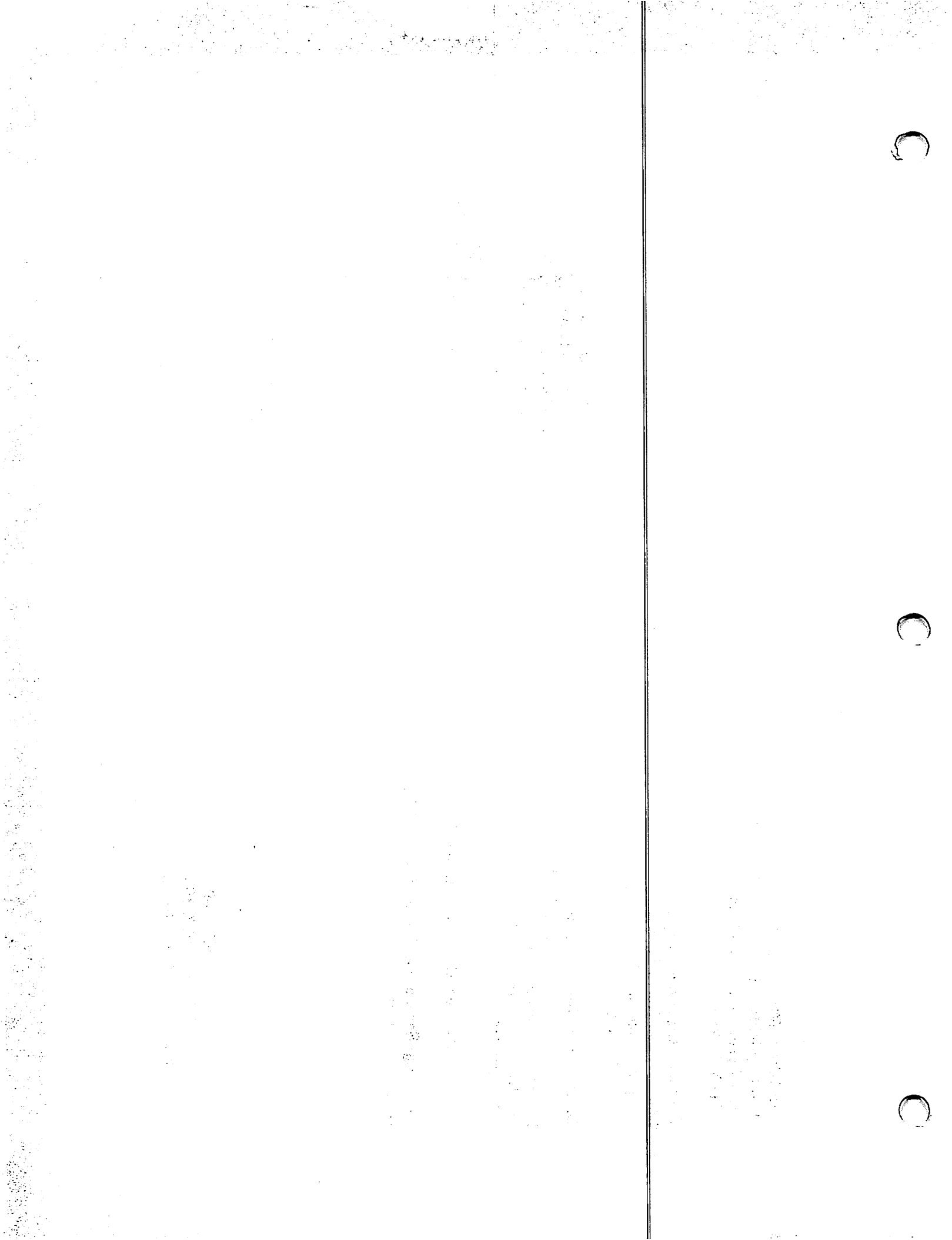
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Tales for my grandchildren  
both real and adopted  
to all of whom these memoirs  
are lovingly dedicated.

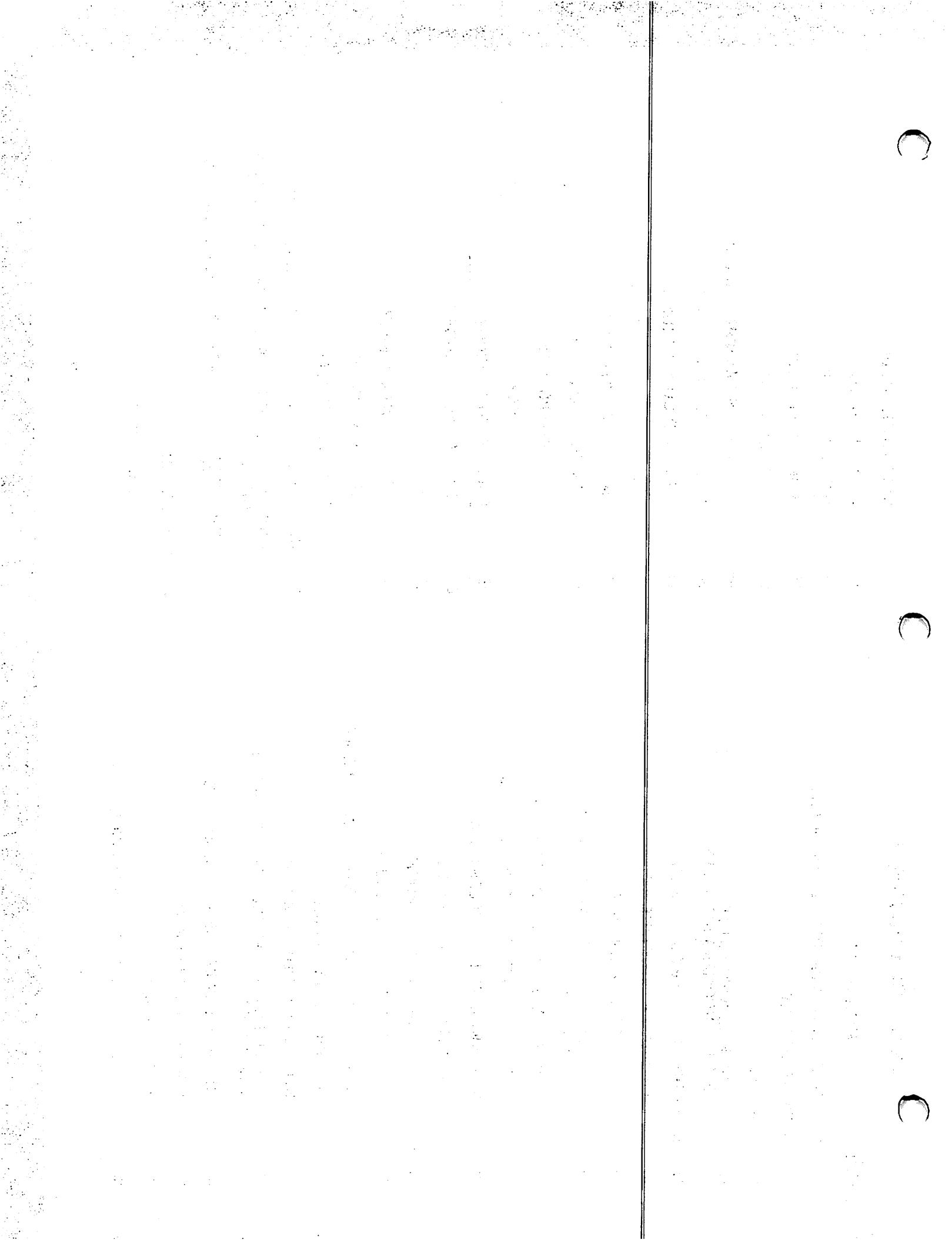
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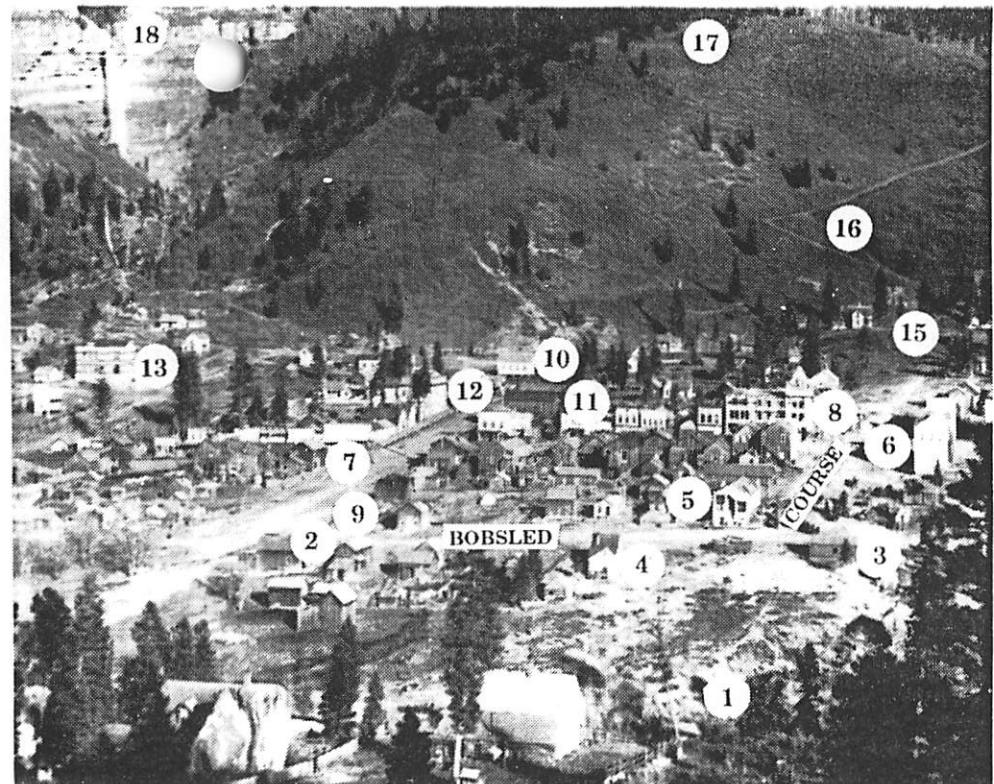
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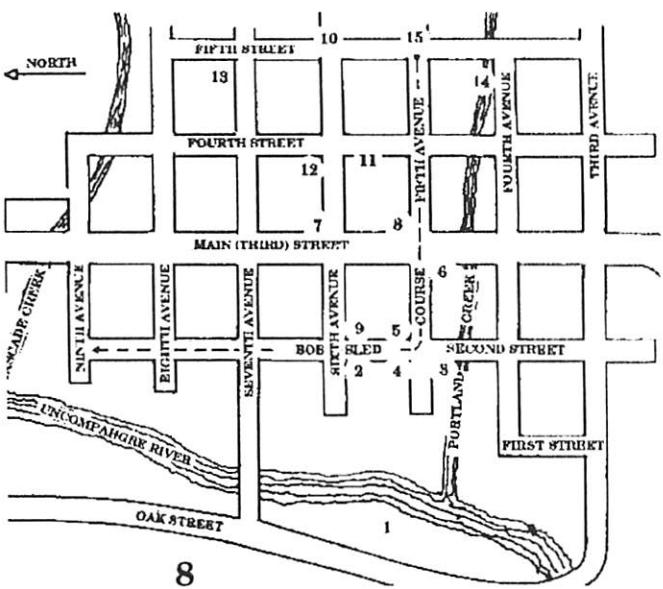
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(Illustration at right derived from Ouray map in Gregory and Smith's *Mountain Mysteries*.)



## POINTS OF INTEREST

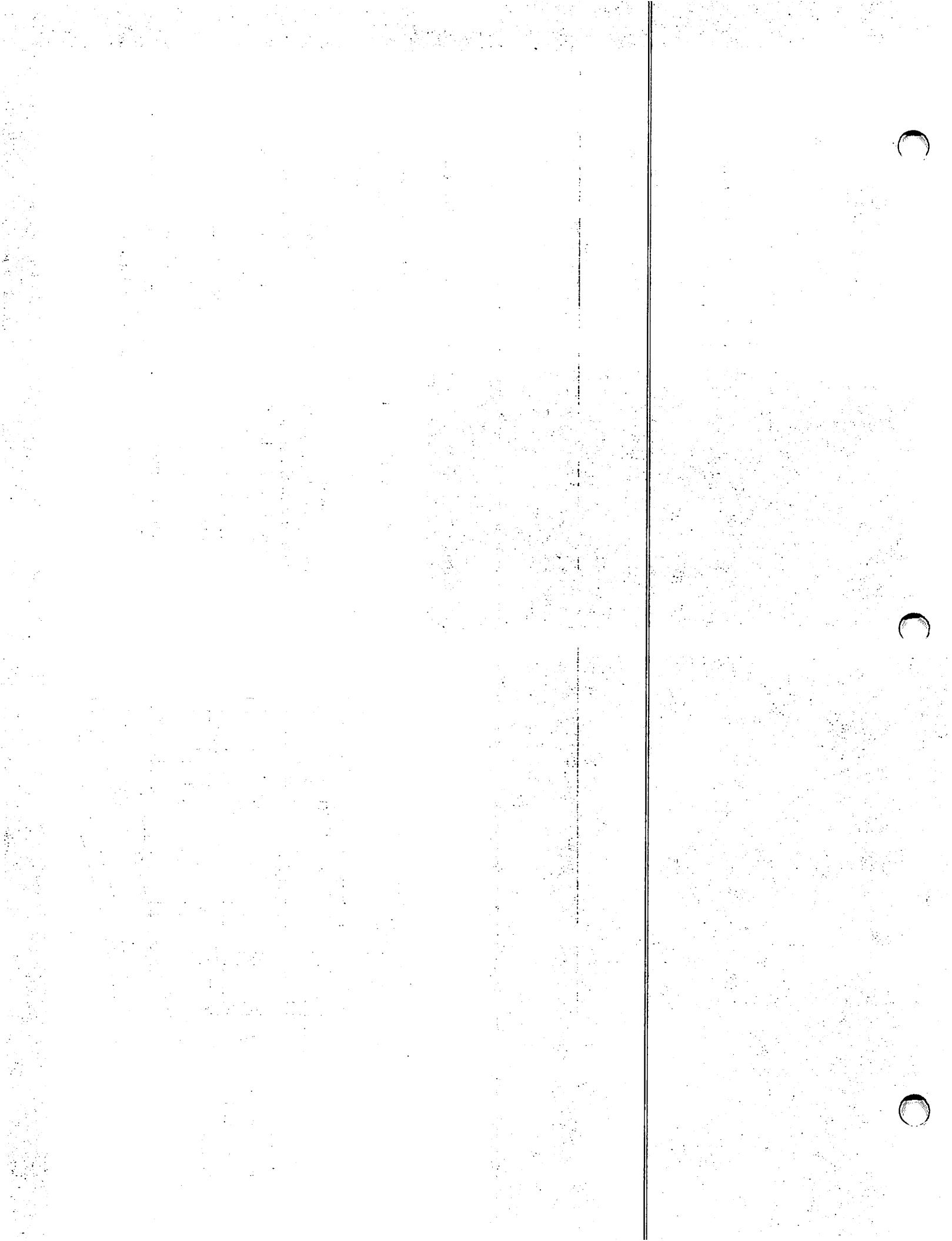
- 1 - Oak Street Bluff overlooking Uncompaghre River.
- 2 - Assay Office.
- 3 - Beaumont Livery Service.
- 4 - W. E. Block Residence.
- 5 - D. C. Hartwell Warehouse.
- 6 - Wright Building. (Opera House yet to be built to the South.)
- 7 - W. S. Home and Company.
- 8 - Beaumont Hotel. (Under construction.)
- 9 - Future Location of the Town Plunge.
- 10 - Hot Springs. (Source of water for Town Plunge.)
- 11 - W. S. Home Residence.
- 12 - Dixon House. (Burned to the ground during 1892; now site of City Hall.)
- 13 - Ouray School.
- 14 - Portland Creek. (Primary source of town flooding over the years.)
- 15 - Vinegar Hill.
- 16 - Pack Trail.
- 17 - Glacial Moraine.
- 18 - Cascade Falls.
- 19 - Amphitheater.

## OURAY, COLORADO 1886

As photographed by William H. Jackson

from point high on Western mountain slope below Twin Peaks. (Colorado Historical Society)

Benchmark elevation at future Court House site:  
7,811 feet.



## A BIT OF HISTORY

The founding of Ouray is generally accepted to have occurred in July 1875 after a group of prospectors entered the valley from the south, found minerals in several locations, and built log cabins to protect themselves through at least part of the ensuing winter. The next spring the rush was on, streets were laid out, and most of Ouray's timber was cut for cabins and fuel. The town was incorporated on October 2, 1876, named for Chief Ouray of the Uncompaghre Utes, just two months after statehood had become official for Colorado on August 1, 1876. Ouray County was carved out of San Juan County on January 18, 1879, with Ouray being designated as the county seat.

In the 1886 overview picture on the preceding pages, the effect of the rapid growth of the town is evident, as is also the virtual absence of trees within the town itself. However, overview pictures taken in later years show the gradual greening of the town, until today a photographer has difficulty finding a vantage point that gives an unobstructed view of the town's buildings. The Oak Street bluff is another impediment in the picture on the preceding pages because it obscures the Uncompahgre River which is below the brow of the hill. The W. E. Block residence and the Hartwell warehouse, which figure in the memoirs, are prominent on Second Street, just two blocks east of the river.

D. C. Hartwell was an entrepreneur who facilitated a significant portion of Ouray's early business growth. He built the two-story warehouse in 1883, the first brick building in Ouray, that began shipping equipment and supplies to the mines above Ouray by burro "train." He was among a group

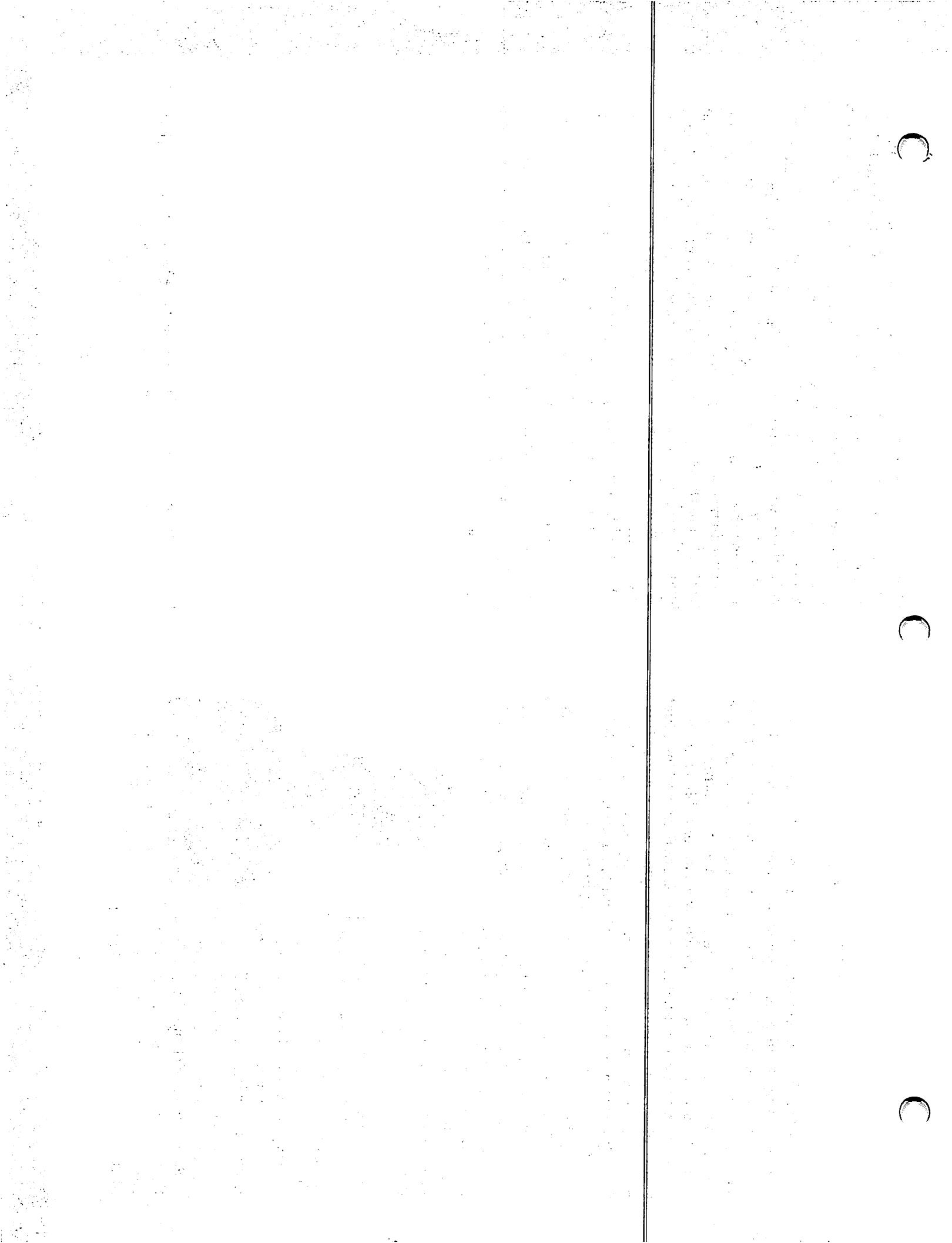


D.C. Hartwell. (Ruth Gregory collection)

of investors that contracted with Frank Carney to build the Beaumont Hotel in 1886. His undertakings also included the electric power system, an ore sampling works, and the livery stables. Hartwell, who was born at Lunenburg, Massachusetts in 1838, migrated westward with the frontier. In 1868 he was connected with the Kansas Pacific railway then being extended toward Denver and became a resident of Colorado Springs. He finally moved to Ouray in 1877, where he became purchasing agent for the Pueblo Smelting company and thus was heavily involved in promoting such mines as the Red Mountain, the Yankee Girl, and the Guston. He was ambitious and frequently operated at the edge of his financial resources. Consequently, by early 1892 he was being pressed financially, and the 1893 financial crash which followed the withdrawal of Federal support for silver placed him in bankruptcy.<sup>1</sup> He salvaged a ranch north of Ouray where he lived in retirement until his death in 1902.

The Uncompaghre Ute Indians played a part in Ouray's early history, their reservation being to the north of the new town. The tribe was relocated to Southern Utah in September 1881 following the reluctant Indian ratification of the Treaty of 1880. However, the Utes who lived near Ouray never acted in an unfriendly way.

<sup>1</sup> -A full account of the financial collapse and its effect on Hartwell is given in *Ouray's Beaumont Hotel* by Doris H. Gregory (Ref. 8).



## FORWARD

These memoirs describe family life in a new Colorado mining town as seen through the eyes of and overheard by a small girl who spent her first eleven years in Ouray, but as set down in writing by her sixty years later as she lay terminally ill in a Washington D. C. hospice.

Leigh Block Turner was my mother.

The real pioneer, who with a husband, a sister, and a brother-in-law, entered Ouray by covered wagon in 1878 was my grandmother, Flora Ophelia Latshaw Block. From her I was to hear many of the experiences of life on the trip and during the formative years of this town. But my interests were elsewhere — with radios and things scientific — and I must confess that I did not pay that much attention. But it was my late sister, Mary Lou, who listened intently and remembered much of what was said. I also find that some of my boyhood friends listened. They loved to visit with my grandmother, eat her cookies, help her make doughnuts, and hear what fascinating things she had to say. (Needless to say, she made no headway on the doughnuts until all appetites had been satisfied.)

My mother married Oscar Russell Turner, a civil engineer, on Christmas Day, 1917. But my father was an inventor and visionary who expanded his interests into many fields including radio manufacturing and gold mining. When the 1929 depression came he was over extended. Wiped out, he disappeared for a number years, leaving my mother as sole breadwinner for our family. Three children were born in Salt Lake City during the early 1920's, but one died shortly after birth. By 1930 our family consisted of my grandmother, who kept house, my mother, my sister and me.

In 1942 I graduated from the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, California and proceeded to a wartime position with the U. S. Naval Ordnance Laboratory, first in Washington

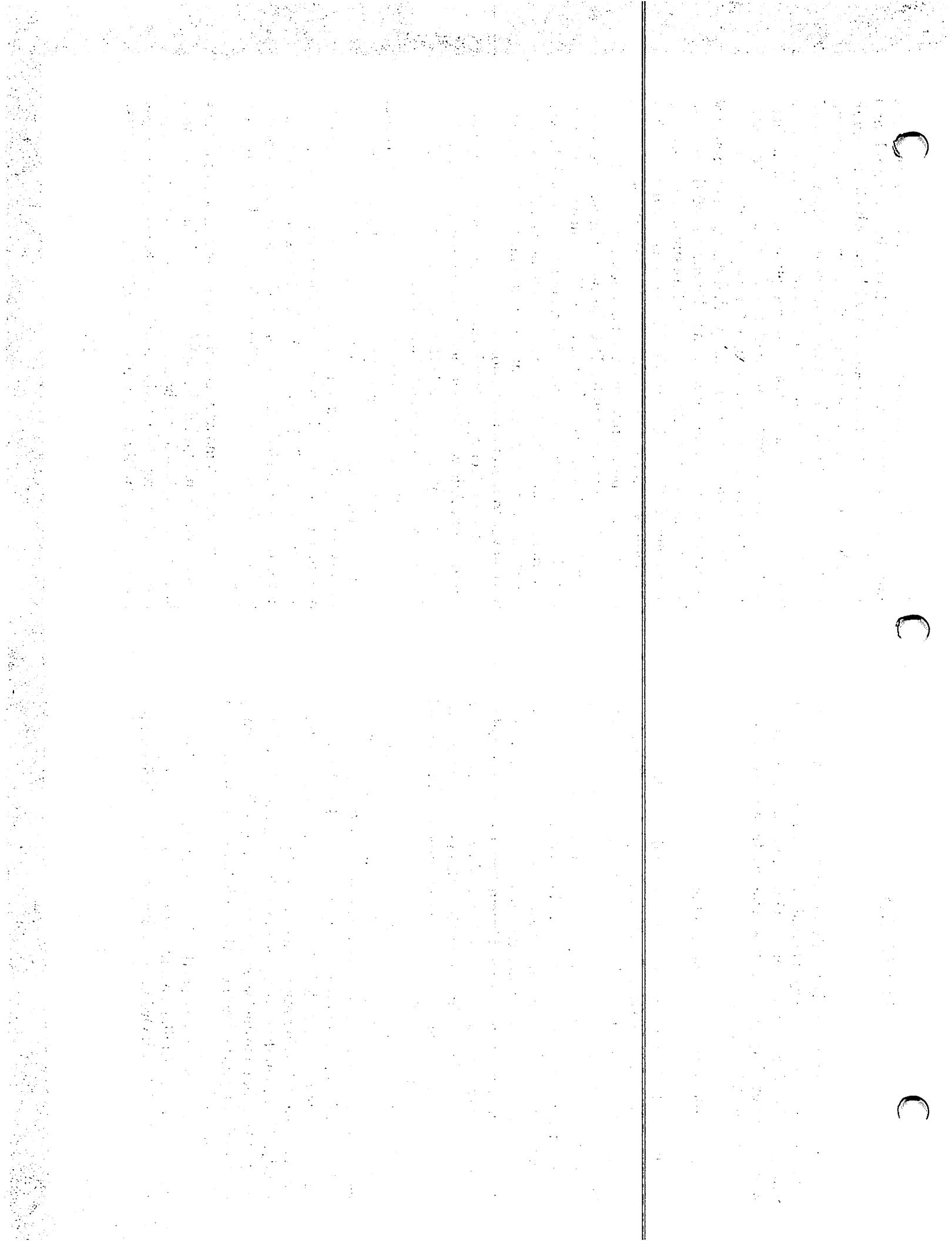
D. C., and later in nearby Maryland. I remained unmarried for a time, initiated the construction of a house in Maryland, and invited my mother to retire and live with me, which she did in 1946, first in rented space, and by 1947 in our new home in an unfinished subdivision. Meanwhile my sister, Mary Lou, had graduated from the University of Utah Medical School, gone to the University of Pennsylvania to complete her post-medical education and internship, and had then married a young doctor by the name of Merle A. Haanes, of Norwegian extraction.

Cancer was discovered in my mother during the summer of 1948, but surgery failed to contain it. By early 1950 the disease began to metastasize into her legs. By late summer she became bedridden. In September, my sister and I reached a decision that our mother should be told that her progressive illness was cancer, and that in all probability she had but a few months to live, and we moved her to a Washington D. C. hospice. She had suspected the nature of her illness for a long time. Nevertheless, confirmation of her fears came as a great shock. For a short period she was in a troubled state. Then, the bravery and the cheerfulness with which she had met previous such periods emerged. Mary and I were never to regret our decision.

"Memoirs of a Happy Childhood" was written within the few months that followed. My mother's opening paragraph and her dedication on page 5 serve better than any words of mine to describe how our mother met the challenge.

Much of the initial manuscript was in her own handwriting. There followed a second draft, partially in her handwriting and partially in that of friends to whom she dictated. This draft was then typed. By Thanksgiving she had rewritten approximately one third of the typewritten draft, and the resulting manuscript was labeled "final." However, the final version was destined never to be completed. After a period of coma, the sands of our mother's life ran out shortly after midnight on December 10, 1950.

"Operation Memoirs" was supported by several of my mother's friends who had kept all the permutations of the memoirs in a large envelope beside her bed. Although I read snatches of the evolving story from time to time and helped them search our new home in Maryland for documents (some of which I recovered later



from the a. [of our old home in Salt Lake City), I did not play any significant part in the development of the memoirs. In 1953 when I opened the large envelope I found to my dismay a large number of disorganized sheets, some handwritten and some typed. Many carried penciled-in changes and corrections. I proceeded to organize this material and compile a coherent story. I have attempted to preserve the original detail and character. I edited where editing seemed necessary. My late sister, Mary Lou, also took a whack at the story, undertaking research into the history of the family, searching cemetery records, and recovering our grandfather's civil war and pension records from the National Archives.

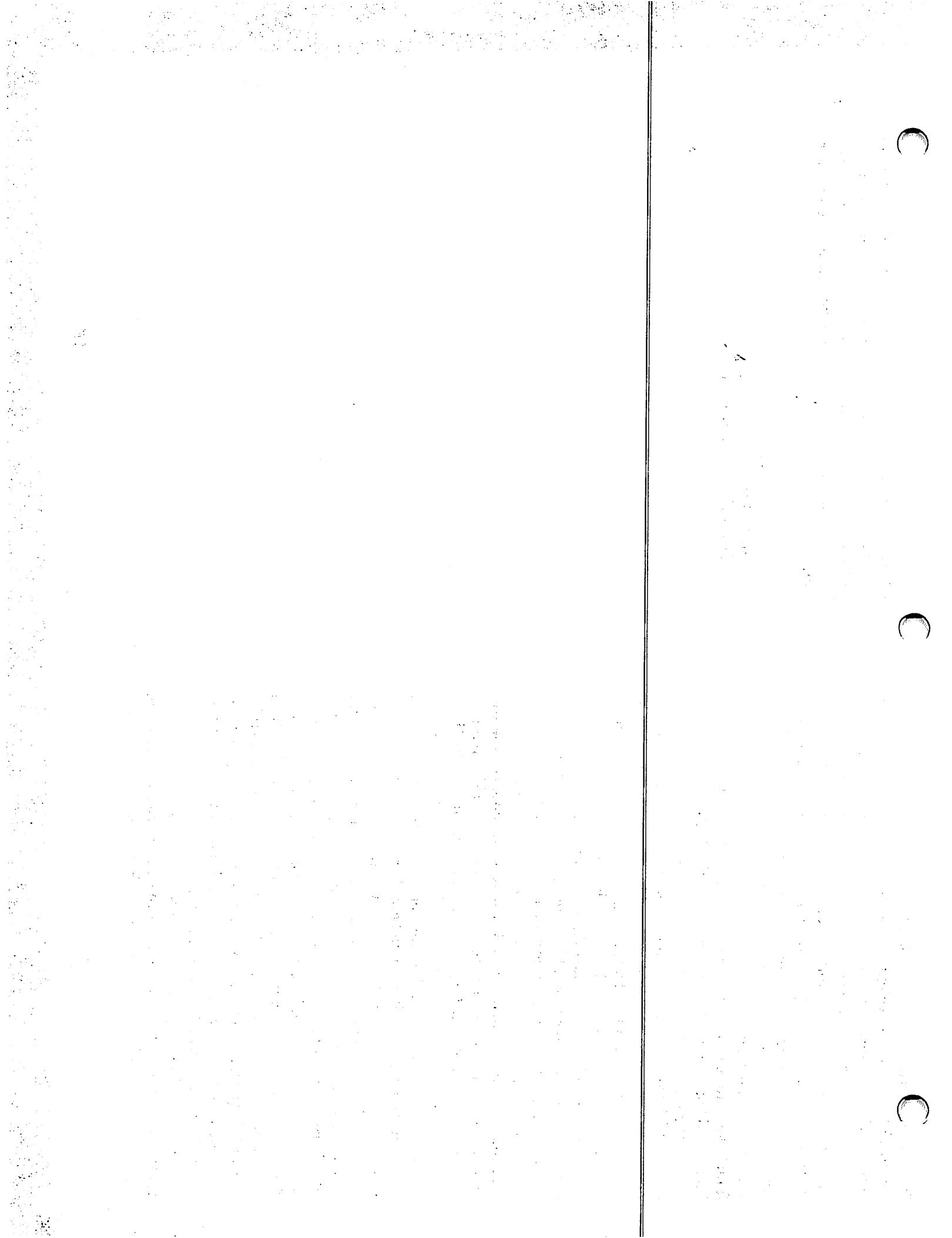
Without access to the family records, which were not recovered until later, my mother made some errors in dates — but never more than a year. These corrections have now been made in the memoirs. What is fascinating to me was my mother's ability to recall the events of her early childhood as she lay dying. But, it sustained her in her last days. She had faith that grandchildren would appear to read her memoirs, and so they did — seven in all plus eleven great grandchildren as of this time.

Ditto® copies of the memoirs were first reproduced and distributed to family members at Christmas in 1953. During the summer of 1954 I authorized the *Ouray County Herald* to publish selected portions which they did serially beginning with their July 16th issue, and continuing until September 10th. Twenty-two years then passed. In the intervening years, I had married and both my sister and I had gained family members who had not received copies of the original edition. Additionally, my sister and her husband had undertaken research on their travels west and located new information on our forebears, as previously noted. She therefore undertook to reproduce a second edition, which was distributed in 1976, and we agreed to jointly generate a condensed version with pictures that might be publishable in a magazine such as *American Heritage*. However, this was to take until 1987, given each of our professional and family responsibilities. Then inquiries to *American Heritage* brought word that they no longer desired this type of manuscript!

Sadly, in 1988, my chief collaborator — my sister — passed away after an unsuccessful battle with cancer. After discussing my options with others, I decided to publish the memoirs in book

form, augmented by three final sections, the first related to our family, the second devoted to our family's subsequent visits to Ouray, and the third concentrating on a particular undertaking in my mother's professional life, the design of a Veterans' memorial.

William R. Turner  
April, 1991  
Silver Spring, Maryland



## MEMOIRS OF A HAPPY CHILDHOOD

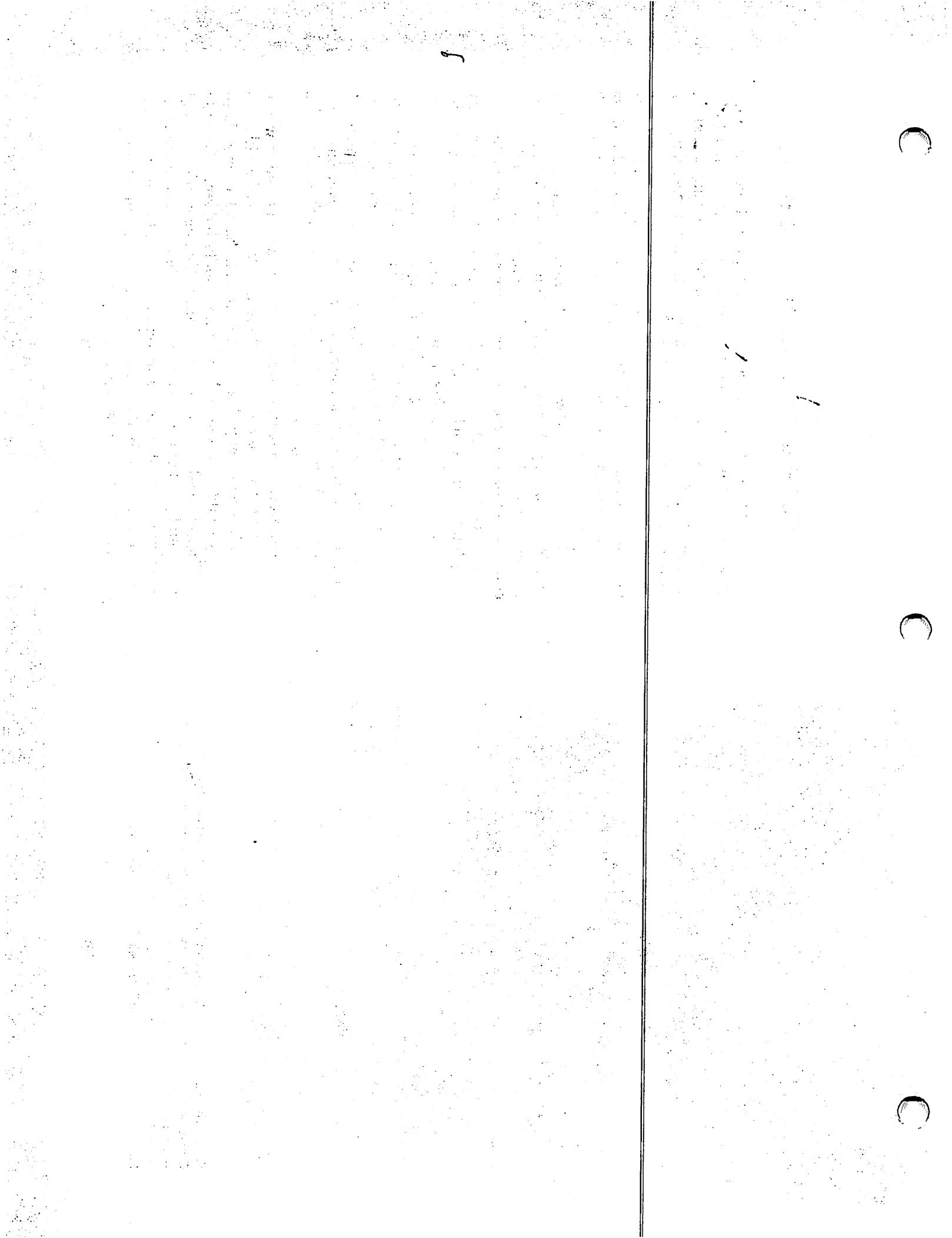
The sands of my life seem to be running low. I fear that many of the plans I have been making for my old age are not to be fulfilled. For instance, I had hoped to be able, someday, to gather my grandchildren about my knee and to tell them tales of my own rather exciting childhood. I have lived through an interesting era, among interesting people, and in interesting places. As historical background I'll have to begin with odds and ends of family history told to me long ago, the accuracy of which I can't exactly guarantee.

My grandfather, Hyrum E. Block, was the youngest member of a Jewish family that came to the United States from central Europe during the early 1800's. The family was well educated, cultured, and well to do. Its various branches spread as far west as California and all prospered. Rotund, jolly, and handsome, my grandfather stayed in St. Louis where he was connected with the big fur market. He was first married when quite young to Miss Ellen Kerr of the old Virginia Kerr family. She died a few years later during a cholera epidemic leaving him with three small children: my father, Willie, aged about six years; Charlie, about four years old, and a baby, Susie. This little family was farmed out among the relations. The Kerr grandmother took over Susie and Charlie. My father spent some time at her household also, and much time with his father's people.

The Kerrs' were very strict Methodists and Sunday was a day of austerity. No work of any kind was done. Food cooked the day before was heaped upon the big side board where those hungry could help themselves. Play was forbidden. The only reading allowed was religious reading. The Jewish household was equally orthodox, observing the Sabbath upon Saturday, and living by the Jewish law as very literally interpreted. Small wonder that little Willie grew up with very confused religious views, being in these two opposite camps.



Wintertime in the lower Uncompahgre valley during the 1880's with Ouray just beyond the gap in the mountains to the south and Mount Abrams (12,800 feet high) in the distance. "Wa'al," the prospector replied, "jest keep going this road 'til you can't go a damn bit farther, and you'll be thar!" (Block-Turner collection)



## Latshaw Family Linage

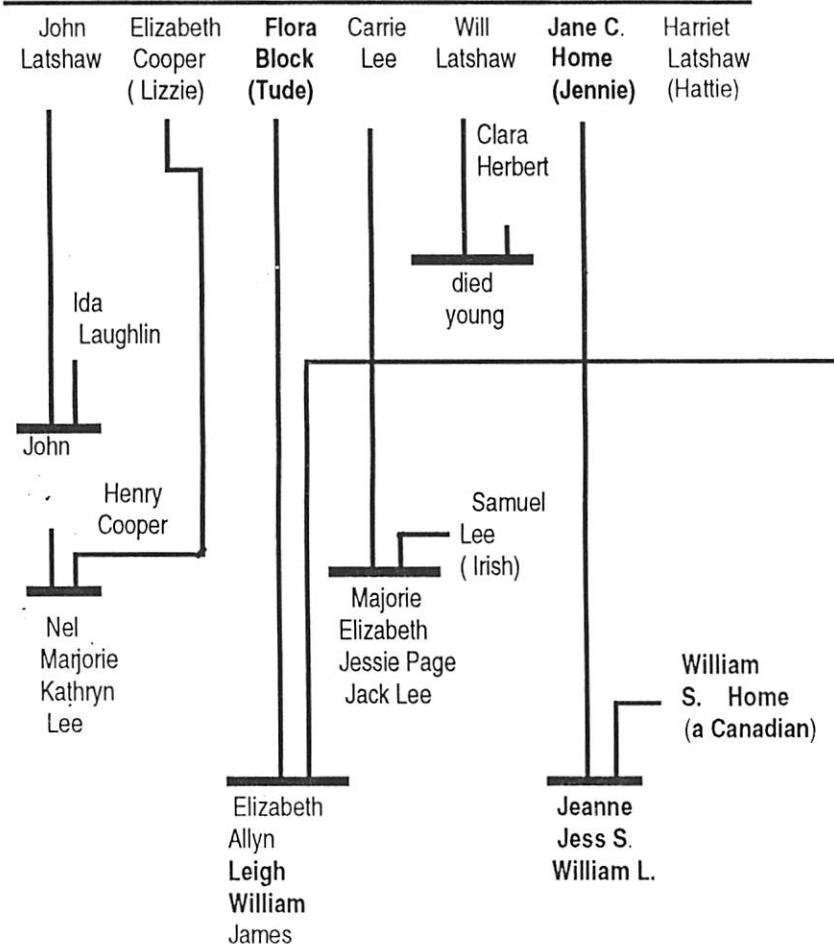
Benjamin Chapman

John Latshaw (1783-1851)

Thomas Fuller Chapman

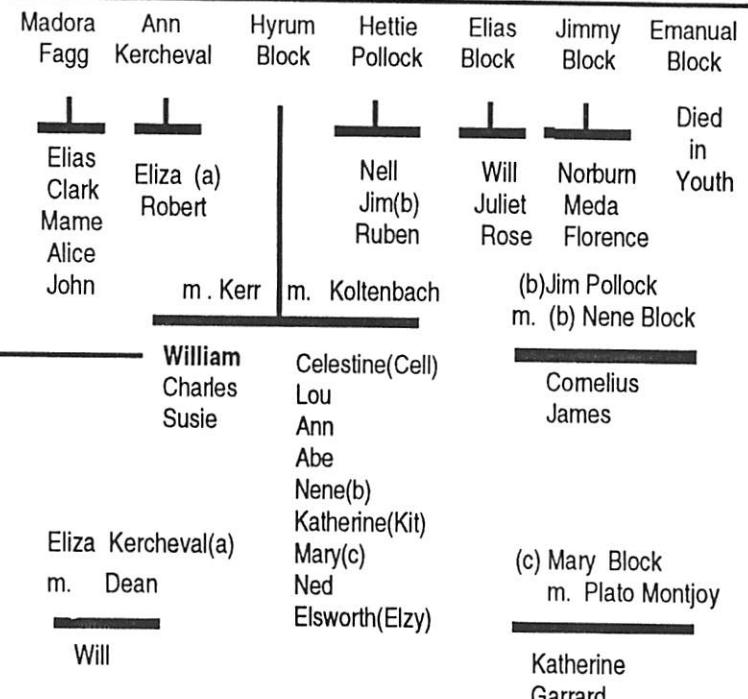
William D. Latshaw (-1876)

Harriet Schribner Chapman

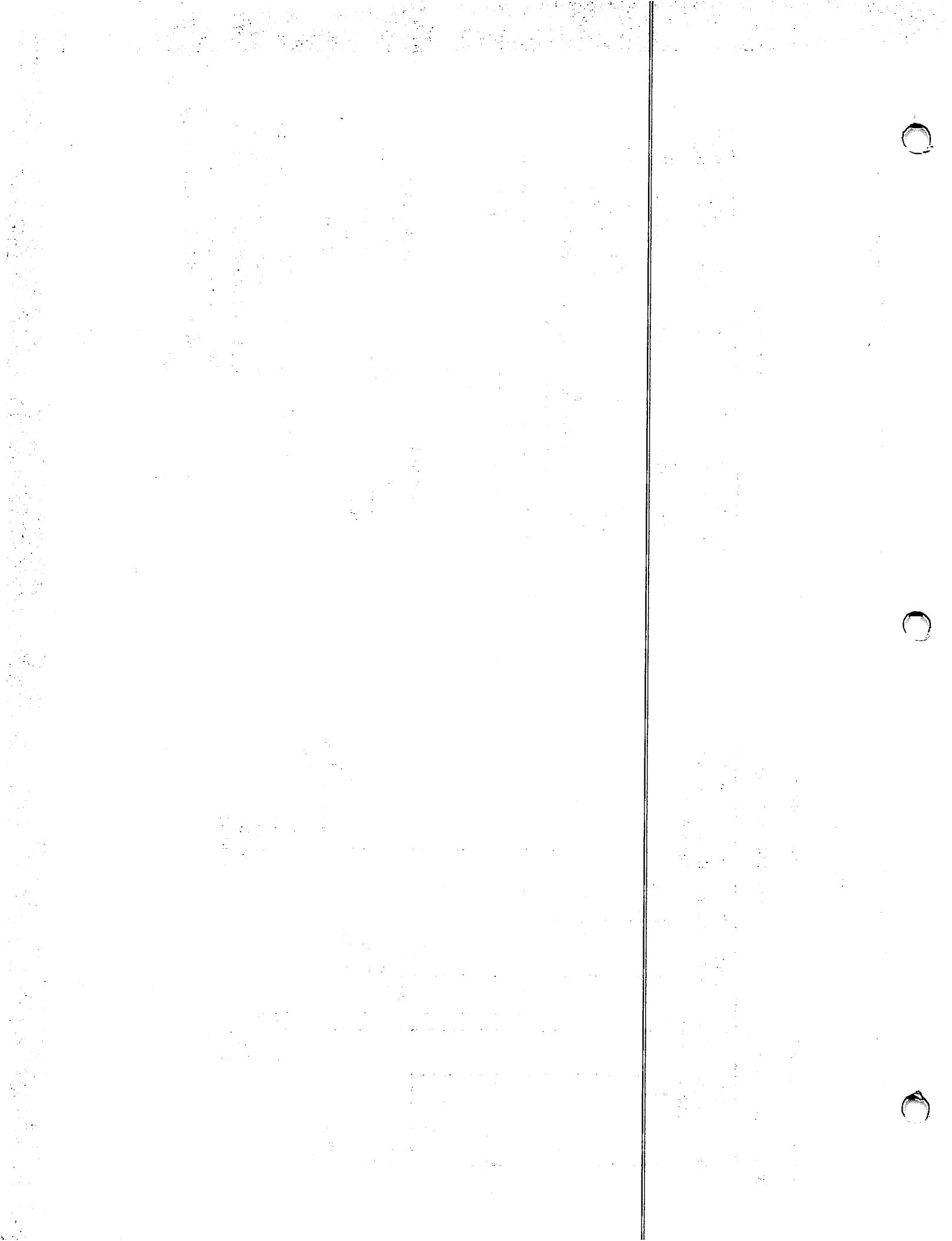


## Block Family Linage

Eleazer & Catherine Block



NOTES: Adults and children who lived in Ouray are shown in **bold face type**. Alphabetic letters in parentheses tie together marriages that could not readily be connected by lines.



## A Widowed Grandfather Elopes with His Young Ward

Among my grandfather's clients was a man named Koltenbach who lived and trapped furs up in the far northern wilderness of Wisconsin. He sent his furs down each spring by boat to the St. Louis fur market. One spring he brought with him his little daughter, Mary Louise, whose mother had died. Being a strong Roman Catholic, he placed her for education and training in a big school for girls, the Lorreto Academy, run by Catholic nuns at St. Louis and asked that my grandfather look after her needs. She was a beautiful little thing, petite, with snappy black eyes and long silky brown hair. She lived at the convent until she was seventeen years old when she eloped with and married my widowed grandfather!

He attempted to gather together his children and to set up housekeeping again, but Grandmother Kerr was reluctant to relinquish care of Charlie and Susie to this very young Catholic bride. When Susie was taken sick she came at once and reclaimed them. But my father and his little stepmother got along beautifully, though he was only eight years younger than she. He helped her raise her fast growing brood of children, nine in all: Cell, Ann, Lou, Abe, Nene, Kit, Mary, Ned, and Elzy, all of whom were raised in the Roman Catholic faith. My grandfather also joined the Catholic Church before his death. But in spite of the great affection between them, Mary Louise did not succeed in making a Catholic of my father.

## Love on a Mississippi River Boat

I forgot to mention that my father had been born at Ashley, Pike County, Missouri in 1847. This area was afterward made famous by Mark Twain's stories of the Mississippi. As a young man, my father was a purser on a big Mississippi River steam boat and enjoyed the colorful gay life of that era. He so often told us tales of the luxuriousness, the fine eating, the beautiful dances, the gambling, and the occasional races between boats.

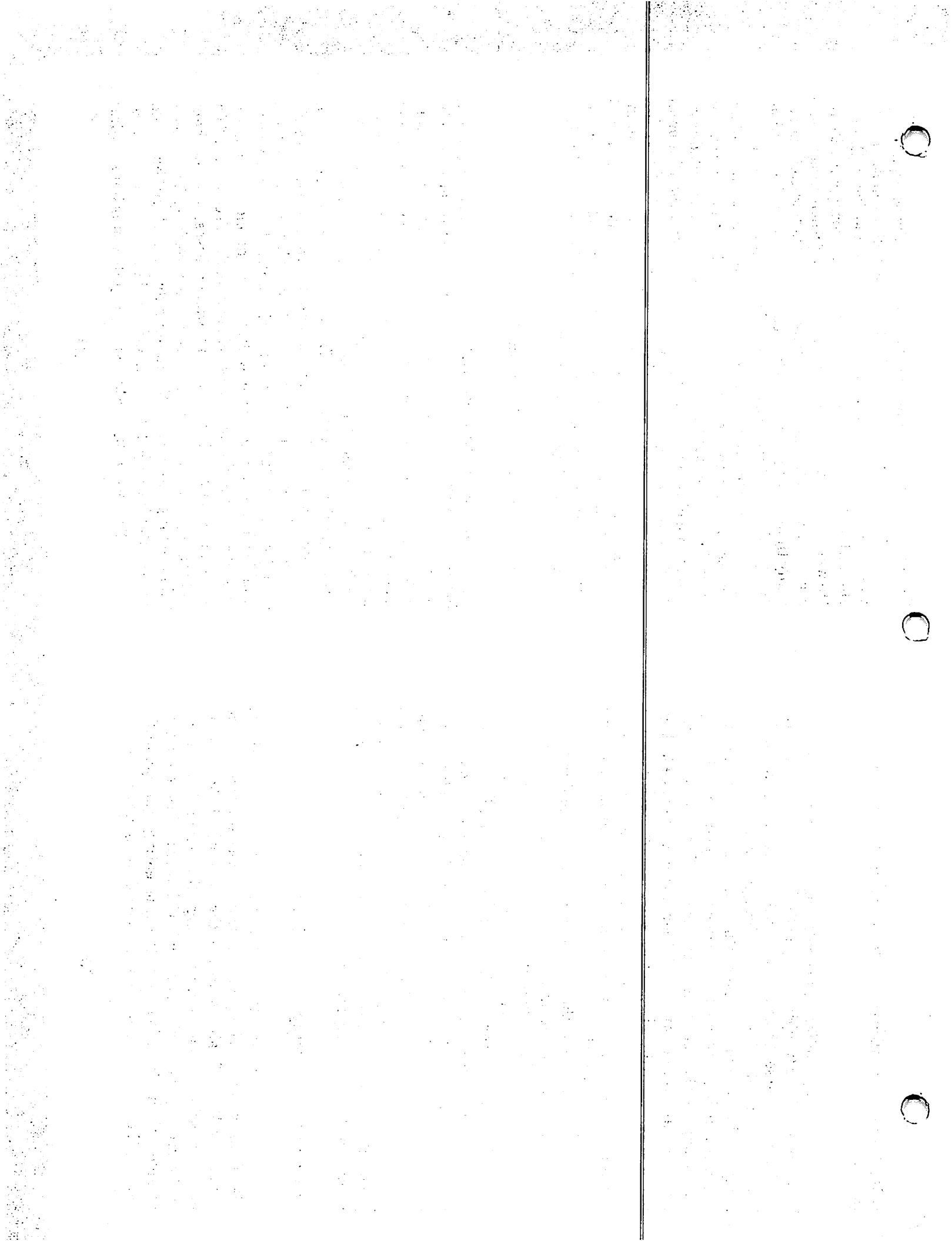
These were the high points of excitement for the season.

It was on board the river boat that he met my mother. She was Miss Flora Ophelia Latshaw, born in 1856 at Paris, Illinois. Her father, William Latshaw, was editor of the local paper there. He was much older than my grandmother, of French descent, and a man of very strong political convictions. He had to hide out many times during the Civil War because he believed in freedom for the slaves. Paris was really a Southern town! He gave a number of his children Shakespearian names. He left to all of us, his descendants, the heavy dark eyebrows that characterize our faces. My grandmother, Harriet Chapman, was descended from a long line of Scotch Presbyterian ministers, and the Chapman family was quite a distinguished one in New England. My grandparents raised a family of seven: Elizabeth (Lizzie), John, Carrie, Will, my mother, Flora Ophelia (called Tude), Jennie, and Hattie. Two children died during their babyhood. My mother, although a rather frail girl, outlived all of her brothers and sisters and died at Salt Lake City in 1937.

## A Grounding in the Household Arts

Grandma Latshaw saw to it that all of her family were raised to be good Presbyterians! All of the girls were well grounded in the household arts of weaving, sewing, canning, preserving, pickling, and soap making. They made their own soap using hickory ashes to form lye which they mixed with grease, and used this soap for everything but toilet purposes. They wove their own sheets in strips about forty inches wide, then hand whipped two strips together to make a sheet. These seams were ripped out and reversed once a year to get more wear out of the sheets! The girls did most of their own sewing, too. Each fall and each spring, Grandfather would take them all to a big mill in Paris where each would select material for a new dress. This at once became the "best dress," and the one the season before, the "second best." Of course, in summer they had many wash dresses, most of them elaborately trimmed in lace, tucks, and embroidery. The household washing was done by Negro servants but each girl had to do her own ironing with flat irons heated on the stove in the laundry.

One year when my mother was still quite young but showing



a special attitude for sewing, Grandmother Latshaw encouraged her to use her newly acquired skill on a shirt front for her father. The men of those days wore elaborate shirts, terminating at the neck with stocks. She tucked and Shirred and made many tiny ruffles by hand. When it was finished Grandfather was so pleased that he gave her a five dollar gold piece. That was a lot of money for a little girl in a small town in those days.

In the autumn, the family would gather about an outdoor fire and cook apple butter in a great copper caldron, stirring the mixture constantly because a scorch would ruin the whole batch. This was quite a social occasion with the neighbors attending. There were cider and popcorn on the side. In the early spring they went out into the woods and tapped the maple trees for sap. This was cooked down in the copper caldron to make maple syrup. Some of the syrup was cooked to a thickness that could be poured out in the snow to form patties of delicious maple sugar. At other times of the year there were many raids in the woods to bring back wagon loads of hickory and hazel nuts.

Grandfather Latshaw was always a "progressive." He was the first gardener in Paris to attempt raising celery which he brought home from Chicago. He raised tomatoes, and proved that they were good food instead of "poison love apples." He introduced and tried out a new lamp, called a student's lamp. It gave much better light than those then in use, but proved very unstable. This lamp later was developed into the round wick Rochester lamp in general use until the electric light took over. Grandfather brought home to Grandmother one of the first crude models of the sewing machine. Up to this time sewing of all sorts had to be done by hand. He was a fine skater. He and his children spent many a winter evening skating out on a nearby frozen pond until the crisp air drove them home.

## Two Newlywed Couples Go West

My mother and father were married in November 1877 at Paris. Her sister, Jennie, was married soon after to William S. Home, originally a Canadian. The four young people decided to join forces and go west to seek their fortunes.

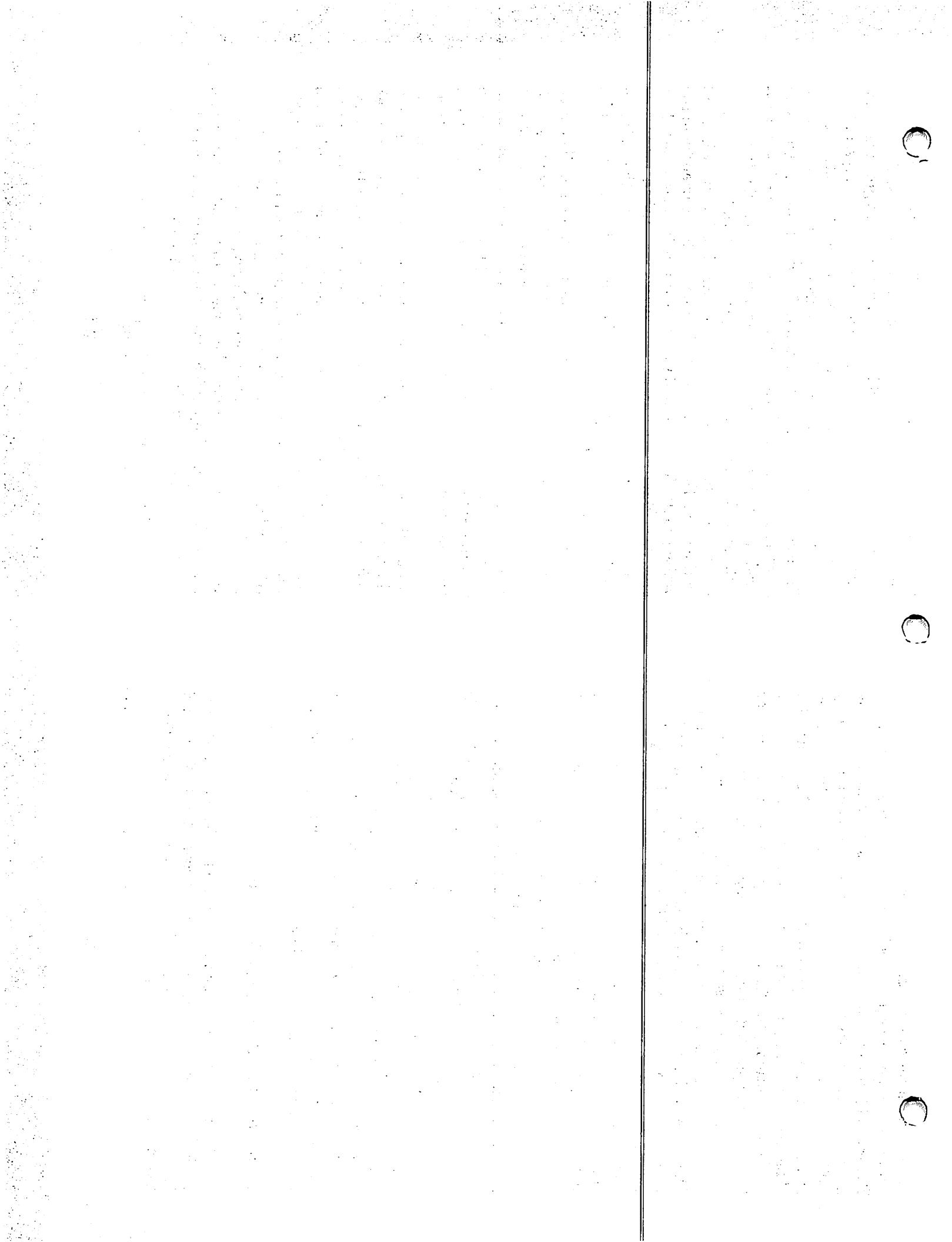
Mother's two brothers had preceded them to Pueblo, Colo-

rado where they had started a printing office and newspaper, and her older sister, Elizabeth, or Lizzie, had gone with the boys to keep house for them. Pueblo was a bustling, fast growing place then. It was the "taking off" place for the mountain camps and the northern trails. A smelter for ore had already been started.

My father and Uncle Will decided to buy out some store fixtures and stock in Pueblo, and to freight them into Ouray to start a general store. Ouray was a new mining camp just discovered up in the heart of the San Juan mountains in Southwestern Colorado. The name Ouray was given the town because it was the name of the chief of the Uncompahgre Ute Indians who lived in the area. He and his wife, Chipeta, were fairly friendly to the white people. They seemed to realize it was futile to resist their entrance. But the tribe as a whole was very disturbed, menacing, and threatening. They were beginning to resent the influx of white settlers, especially when they brought with them white women and children.<sup>2</sup>

So the authorities at Pueblo waited each time until enough "covered wagon" pioneers had assembled, then sent them through with a small detail of U. S. troops. The wagons with their drivers were rented to the immigrants, and returned to Pueblo laden with ore from the newly discovered "diggin's." The wagon train had to traverse about four hundred miles of new road through very rugged country to reach Ouray, part of it over newly laid corduroy, climbing higher each day. There were few bridges over the deep gulches and creek beds. Often it was necessary to unhitch the horses, then use all of them to lower each wagon to the creek bed below and to hoist it to the other side. Of course, then, everyone had to get out and walk. There were many accidents and many frayed tempers. One young bride had brought with her a pair of canaries in a cage. She had to take them with her each time she got out as she was afraid to trust them to the wagon. Another lady was very concerned over a small chest which also had to be carried. After she reached Ouray, she wore some very beautiful jewelry. One day the wagon train had to cross and recross the same deep gulch seven times, and made only five miles of straight going. One evening they encamped upon the

2-A balanced treatment of the Indian question is given in R. David Smith's, *Ouray, Chief of the Utes* (Ref.5).



banks of a river. They had spread tablecloths and dished up food for dinner when a sudden wind swept the whole thing into the river and the rain came down in torrents! My father grabbed a pot of coffee off of the campfire on his way to the wagon. Uncle Will held onto a can of gooseberries he was opening. That was their entire dinner that evening. On another occasion, the horses were not properly secured for the night and wandered off. It took all of the next day for the men-folks to round them up so that the trip could be resumed.

### Food Began to Run Short

The country, however, became more beautiful and rugged the farther up they climbed. The members of the party who had been entrusted with the job of ordering food and supplies for the trip were inexperienced, and food began to run short as the trip was taking longer than they had anticipated. They kept wondering when they would reach Ouray. One day, meeting a prospector and his burro heading out, they asked the usual question, "How much farther to Ouray?"

"Wa'al," he replied, "Jest keep agoing this road 'til you can't go a damn bit farther, and you'll be thar!"



Flora Ophelia Latshaw (Mrs. William E. Block) as a young woman. (Block-Turner collection)

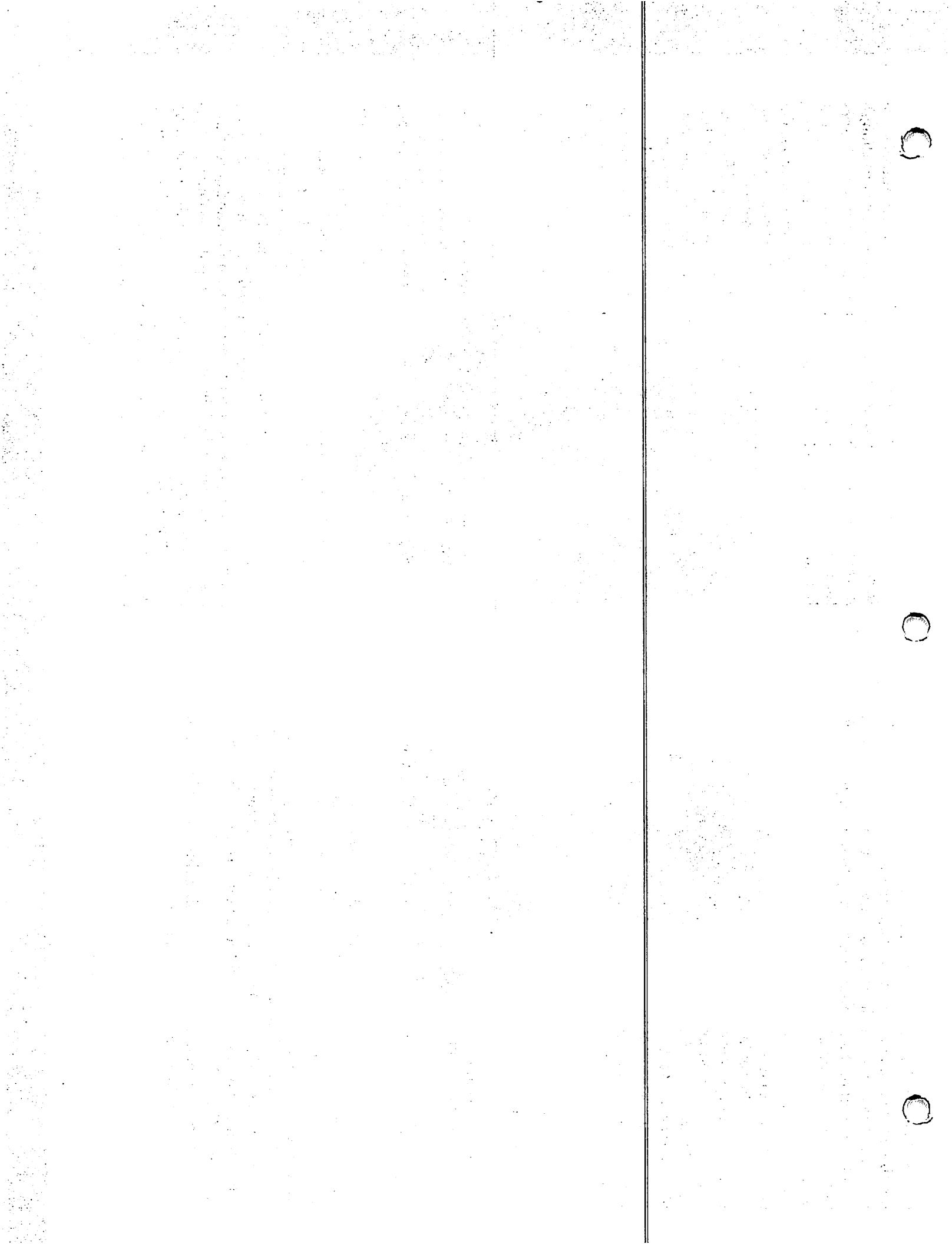
How right he was. The great richly colored mountains seem to curl around Ouray valley so that one senses the sky as though it were the ceiling of a room. Once in the town it was hard to determine how you came in. The mountains were built up in great horizontal ledges of rich ochre and reds, topped with thick growths of pine trees. On the East side, a beautiful six- or seven-branched cascade tumbled from one ledge to another. At this waterfall, the towering mountains parted to enclose a beautiful little court full of quaking aspen. A beautiful mountain creek trickled through this court down into town and across to join the Uncompahgre River.

The Uncompahgre River entering town is formed from a series of streams, one being Canyon Creek which plunges with a great roar from the mesa above through a box canyon. This waterpower has been harnessed. The power company built a hanging walk

through the box canyon which could then be explored. The rock walls of the canyon were always wet and covered with delicate maiden hair ferns, blue bells, fragrant columbine, and other flowers. The thunder of the falling water was quite deafening! Once out of the box canyon, the river flowed along quite peacefully among big boulders through a lovely meadow dotted with quaking aspens and small pine trees. Here we children used to love to play and gather crocuses, buttercups, violets, daisies, wild roses,



William E. Block, as a young man. (Block-Turner collection)

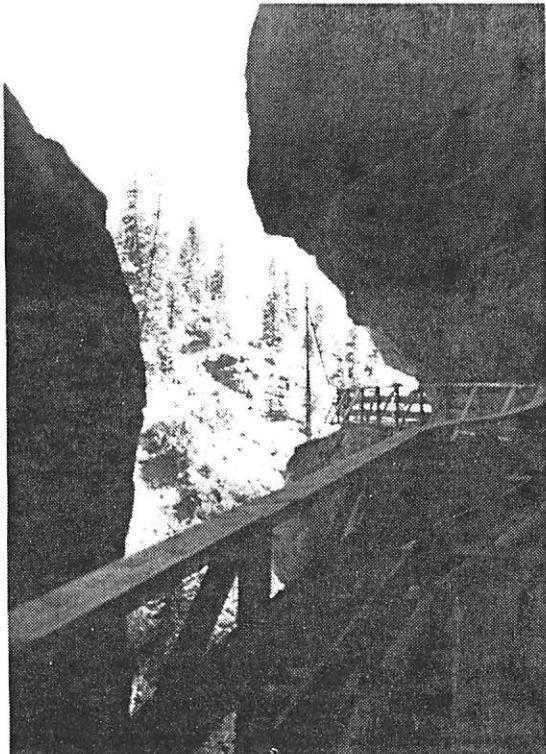


Indian paintbrush and other beautiful wild flowers that bloomed there during their season. We liked to pull down the pliant young aspen trees and ride up and down on them as on rocking horses. We loved to wade in the shallows and collect the shiny pebbles, pieces of quartz, agate, and the iron pyrite which we always called gold. We liked to model

little things from the clay, which we scraped from the river banks. But I am way ahead of my story.

## Beginning of the Ouray Boom

When our pioneers finally reached Ouray in June 1878, they found a very new and crude settlement of tents and hand hewed log cabins among the quaking aspens and the pines. The boom had just started. My father and Uncle Will built temporary cabins with packed dirt floors and oiled paper windows to live in while something better was being built. Their furniture was improvised from packing cases plus what little they had been able to bring with them. There wasn't a cow or chicken within



Canyon Creek enters Ouray through this box canyon and joins the Uncompahgre River. When the power company harnessed it for electricity, they widened the canyon and built this hanging walk. (William R. Turner, 1954)

miles, but trout were plentiful in the river. Wild game of all sorts—deer, elk, grouse, etc.—were easy to obtain.

By the time of their arrival, the town had been laid out. Building sites were being allocated. A crude water system was built so that each householder no longer had to bring water up from the creek. A sawmill, freighted in and set up, began turning out lumber of all sorts so that more substantial building could be undertaken. The road in through the mountains was improved and bridges built. Both travel and freighting were simplified and speeded up. Bricks and windowglass could now also be freighted in.<sup>3</sup> A brick courthouse was being planned to protect the fast-growing records of the camp. Warehouses, stores, and other commercial establishments sprang up.

Another element flocked in to join the more substantial pioneers. These were the adventurers, gamblers and people with shady pasts. Saloons began to spring up along Main Street. On a very prominent site, the Dixon House was built. This was a two story log structure, a combination hotel, gambling hall, and bar which soon acquired a very bad reputation.<sup>4</sup> One of the most vivid memories of my childhood was being awakened during the night the Dixon House burned down!

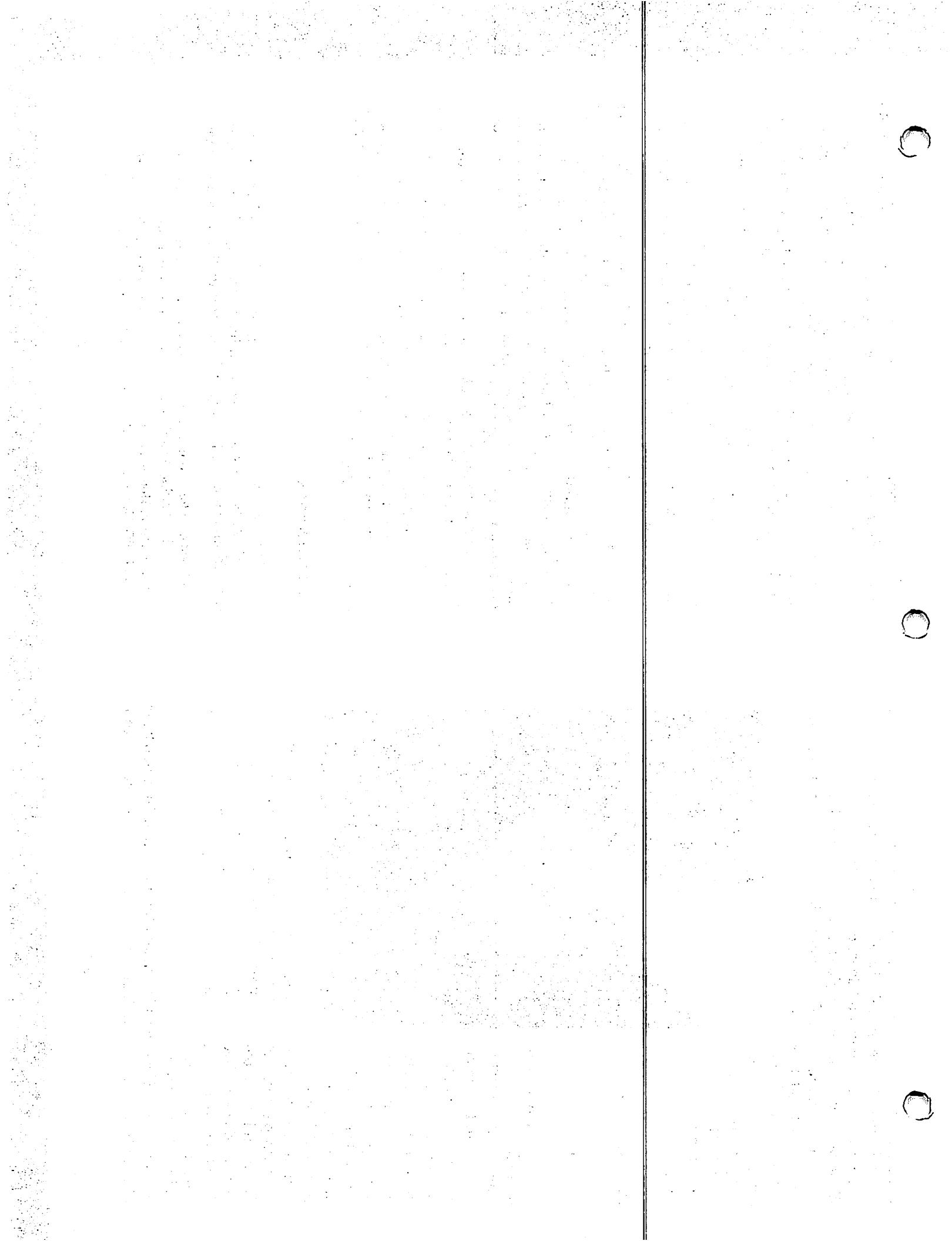
Dams were built in an attempt to protect the town from the floods that resulted from spring freshets when the little Portland Creek that usually flowed so gently through the Amphitheater came roaring down wrecking everything in its path. One year the flood forced open the door of a newly established furniture store and washed rolls of carpet and linoleum through the store and down the main street!

## The Uncompahgre Indians

Our town was then on the edge of the Indian Reservation. Thus, there was always a certain feeling of apprehension when the Indians came in to shop or look around. They would appear

3-Good clay for manufacturing bricks existed in Ouray, so there is doubt that bricks, considering their weight were freighted in.

4-The Dixon House may not have had a bad reputation in comparison to frontier hotels of the day. Reportedly, it was well kept.

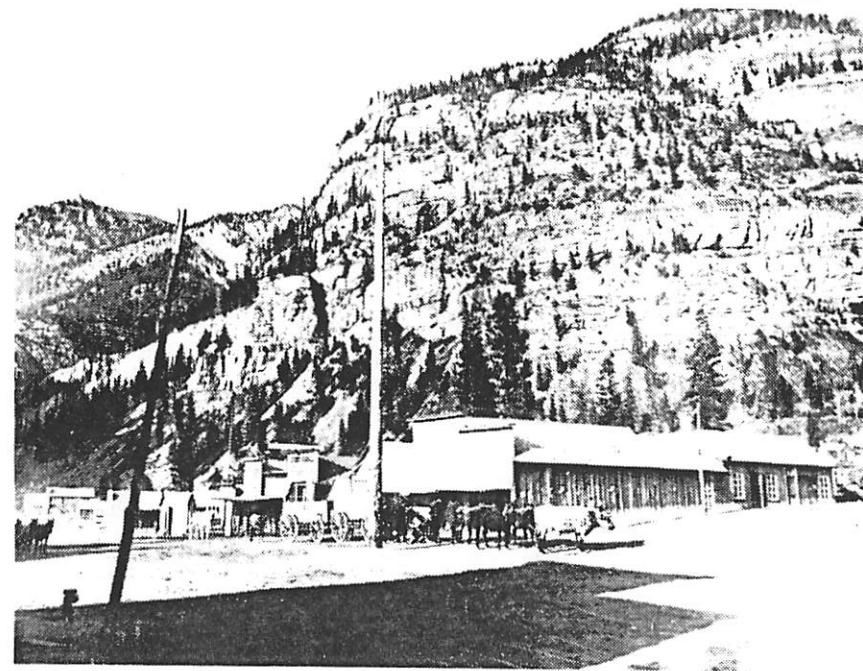


suddenly on a backporch and insist upon being fed. One group of them, having tasted biscuits on a handout, would return often and demand "biscuits." And the timid housewife would have to stop what she was doing and bake a batch! They usually waited until the men were at work before making the rounds. This went on until the men were forced to organize a home guard. Finally, they took the matter up with Chief Ouray who soon put a stop to the begging. Storekeepers had many funny experiences with the Indians, who did not speak English. They traded always in dollars. An Indian who wished to buy some calico would point out a bolt and the trader would measure off a dollar's worth. If the Indian wished more he would lay down another dollar. He never asked for or accepted change.

The Indians were great gamblers. In the summer-time one tribe would pay a visit to an adjoining tribe and they would hold a regular field day. They loved horse racing. Most of the horses were wild ones they had caught and tamed. Some of them were quite speedy. An Indian backing a good horse would throw down a blanket which the other tribe had to match, then a basket or bow and arrow, until quite a bit was at stake. Sometimes they would even place their squaws on the pile! These races would go on and on until one group or the other was quite stripped of its possessions.

Wily old Chief Ouray made quite a killing one year. He had arranged the fall before for some of his white friends to bring in a young race horse which he turned out in the range with the other horses until it was shaggy and ill kept like the rest. Then he swept the field clean before the other Indians caught on. Most of the Indian horses were what we called "calico" ponies, small, patched red and white in color. As we grew older almost every child in town wanted and sometimes acquired a calico pony.

Among the things shipped one year to Uncle Will, when he had bought "sight unseen" the stock of a bankrupt store, was a packing case containing nothing but brightly colored parasols for little girls. What would the store do with these? Just then an Indian came in. Attracted by the bright colors, he picked up a parasol. Uncle Will showed him how to open and close it. The Indian laid down a silver dollar, was given the OK sign, and walked out of the store with his treasure tightly clasped to his



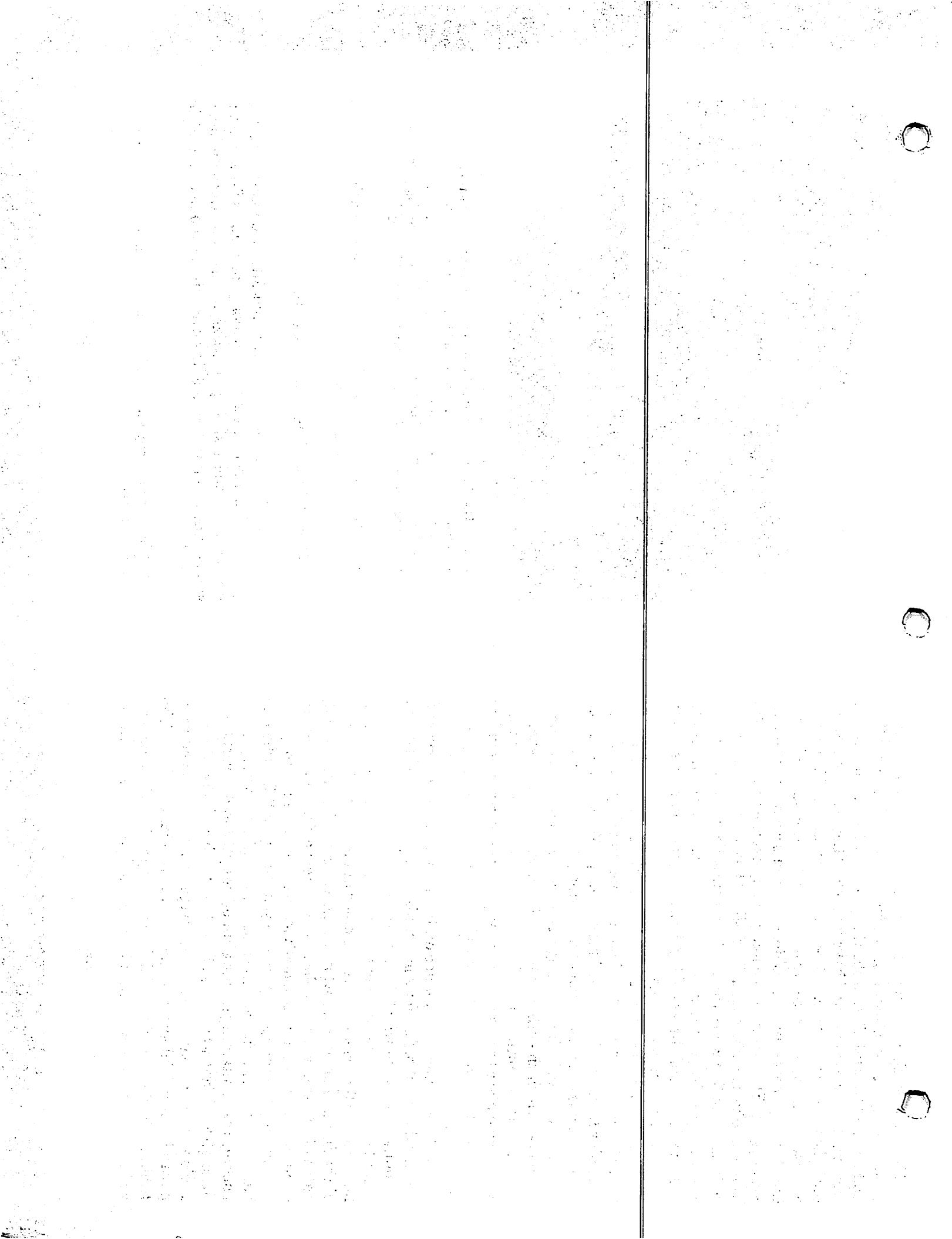
Looking northeast at Ouray's Sixth Avenue and Main Street intersection. The flagpole remained in the center of the intersection until automobiles arrived on the scene and began running into it! (One wag said that the animals drawing wagons had been intelligent enough to go around.) The prominent store beyond the flag pole was Home and Company.<sup>5</sup> (Ouray County Historical Society)

breast. Soon a procession of Indians came in, each intent on acquiring one of those treasures!

What did they intend to do with them?

A traveler coming into Ouray that afternoon answered the question. He had just seen, down along the banks of the river, a line of big Indians sitting on rocks in the sun. Each Indian's squaw stood behind him holding over his head one of the little parasols.

5-Home and Company was owned by Leigh's uncle, W. S. Home, and D. C. Hartwell.



## A Brown-Haired Blue-Eyed "Easter Egg"

Now for some more family history.

Shortly after my mother's marriage and before Aunt Jen and Uncle Will were married, Grandfather Latshaw died and was buried at Paris, Illinois. Grandmother Latshaw broke up house-keeping in Paris and, accompanied by her one unmarried daughter, Hattie, she moved out west and lived the rest of her life in Pueblo, Colorado, near her sons, John and Will.

Mother went to Pueblo early in 1880 to stay with Grandmother Latshaw while her first baby was born, a little girl named Elizabeth, who arrived early in February. Alas, a sudden epidemic ended her too, too short life at three weeks, before my father could reach her. Father and mother had to return to Ouray with empty arms. But a second child, little Allyn, was born in Ouray late that year. He lived to be almost two, but died just a few weeks before I was born. He, too, fell victim to a sickness that struck down many little children in our town. It was very "unsafe" to be a baby in those days!

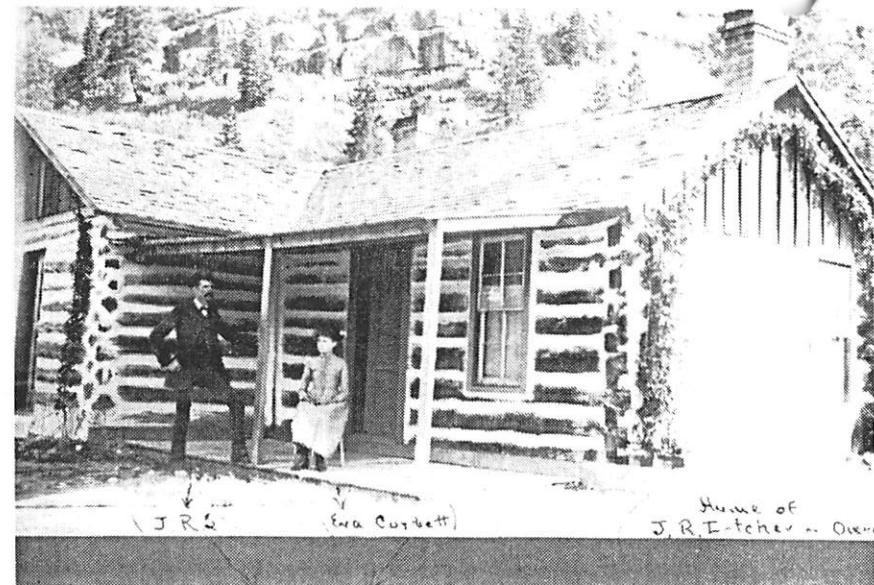
So when I came along, I was the object of so much solicitation that it is a wonder I was raised at all!

I was born on Easter morning, April 9, 1882. A fresh snow had fallen around our cabin and my father cheerfully broke trail to announce to his many friends that "we had a brown-haired, blue-eyed Easter egg at our house."

During 1880, a little girl whom they named Jeanne had been born to Aunt Jen and Uncle Will, and a second daughter, named Jess, was born four years later. This was the same year my brother Willie was born. A second son, William, was born to Aunt Jen and Uncle Will in 1888, but we did not consider him one of our gang. He was our baby and it was a great privilege, when he was very little, to sit in a rocking chair and hold him carefully.

## One Big Happy Family

We four children were raised almost like one family. We



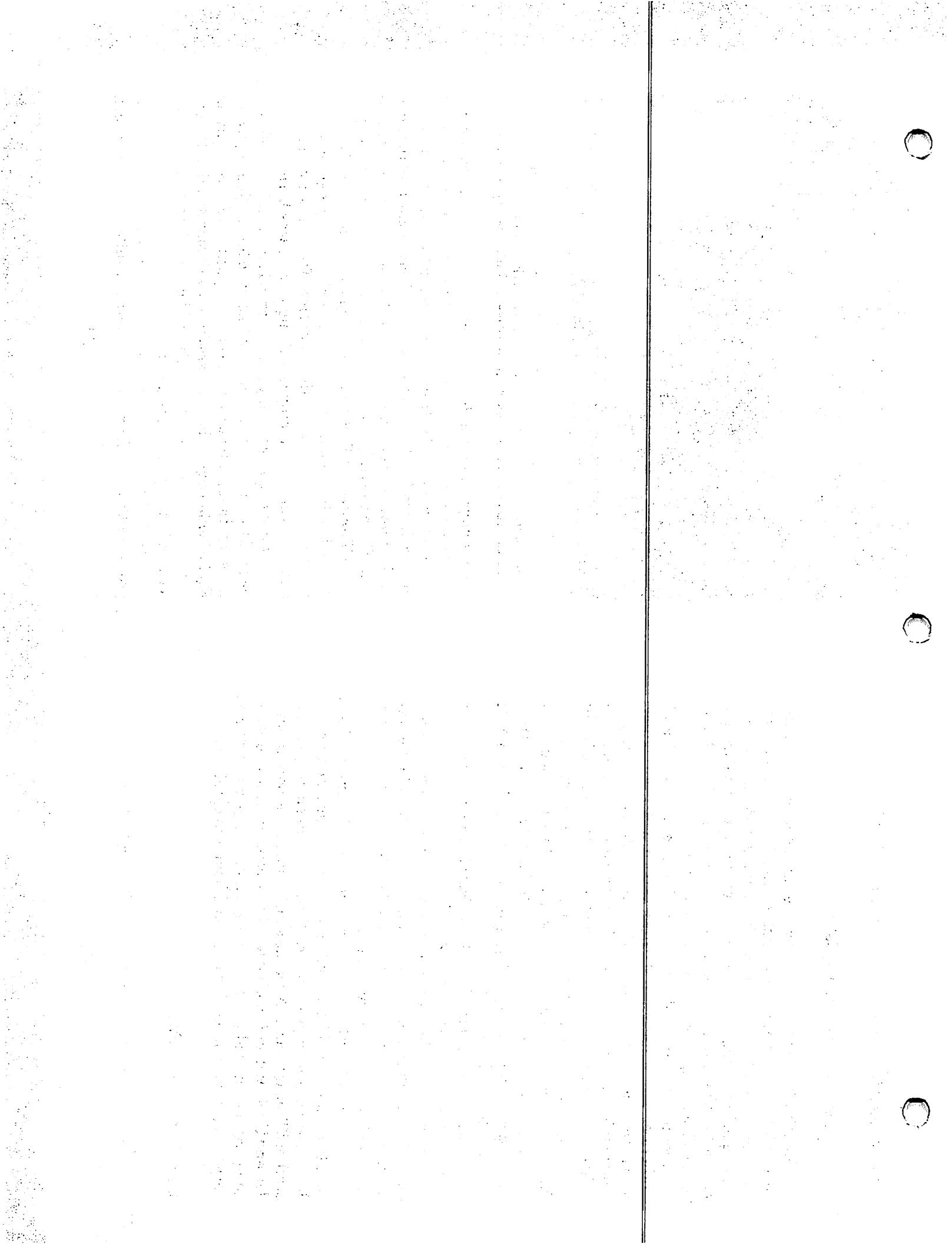
The log cabin home of Jerrold R. Letcher, the popular clerk of the court in Ouray during the 1880's. A notation in the lower margin announced: "Two 'neighbors' awaiting the arrival of Little Lee Block." (Block-Turner collection, negative in Ruth Gregory collection)

always played and ran together. Jeanne and Willie teamed up against Jess and me, who were "real" little girls and liked to play at housekeeping and with dolls. Jeanne, on the other hand, never forgave herself for being a girl, and could outdistance all the boys at their own sports, riding, running, bow and arrow, and climbing. She was straight and slim and hated skirts in those days.

Of course our first crude cabin was before my time. But I do remember the house my father started building soon after he reached Ouray. It was on the lower side of town toward the river and was where my family was living when I was born.

During these years my father worked for a Mr. Hartwell (see page 10), a wealthy man from the East who had built a big warehouse and supply house on the corner opposite to where we lived. My father managed the business for him and saw to it that the big burro trains were started early in the mornings to the mines located in the mountains above.

By the time I had reached the age of memory, our house had grown to three or four rooms, several at different floor levels,



since our lot sloped down to the river. On one side of the front room my father had built a sort of bay window or conservatory which was filled full of green plants and flowers most of the year. I can remember when cold threatened, we slipped newspapers between the glass and the plants to keep them from freezing. The next room was my father's and mother's room. Then came a cheerful dining room, and a kitchen with an iron stove that burned wood. At the back of the stove was a hot water reservoir which had to be frequently filled as we used the water warmed by the fire in the stove.

### Stranded on the Woodpile

My father bought wood by the cord and sent men to split it up into stove lengths. Our woodpile outside the kitchen door was generally as tall as the house! I can remember the day my two-year-old brother managed to climb his way to the top of the pile! When my mother tried to rescue him, the pieces of wood would start to slide. She finally had to send over to the warehouse for a couple of men and a ladder to rescue him!

Inside, the house was very comfortable and cheerful. Mother and father had lined the walls with muslin. Then they put paper over that. On windy days, it was a bit disconcerting to have the walls about you sway in and out, and the ceiling above you billow back and forth. But we were used to it.

Our big front room was heated by a base-burner type stove. This was a large, elaborately trimmed, nickel and black affair, with a coal hopper in the back which held a day's supply of nut-sized hard coal. There was a small area over the pipe in the rear where water could be heated for a cup of tea. The area around the big stove was always quite warm. It was cool by the window, cooler still in the dining room and bedrooms, and good and warm again in the kitchen around the big stove there.

In cold weather we always ate in the kitchen. And there, too, we took our weekly baths. The big wash tub was dragged to the middle of the kitchen floor and filled with warm water from the reservoir. First I, then my brother, sat down in the tub and had a grand splash. We had Ivory® soap in those days, but the soap we liked best was Pears®, made in London. It was advertised

everywhere by a picture of a small child sitting in a tub, reaching vainly for a cake of Pears soap that had skidded out of his hand, with the legend, "He won't be happy 'till he gets it!"

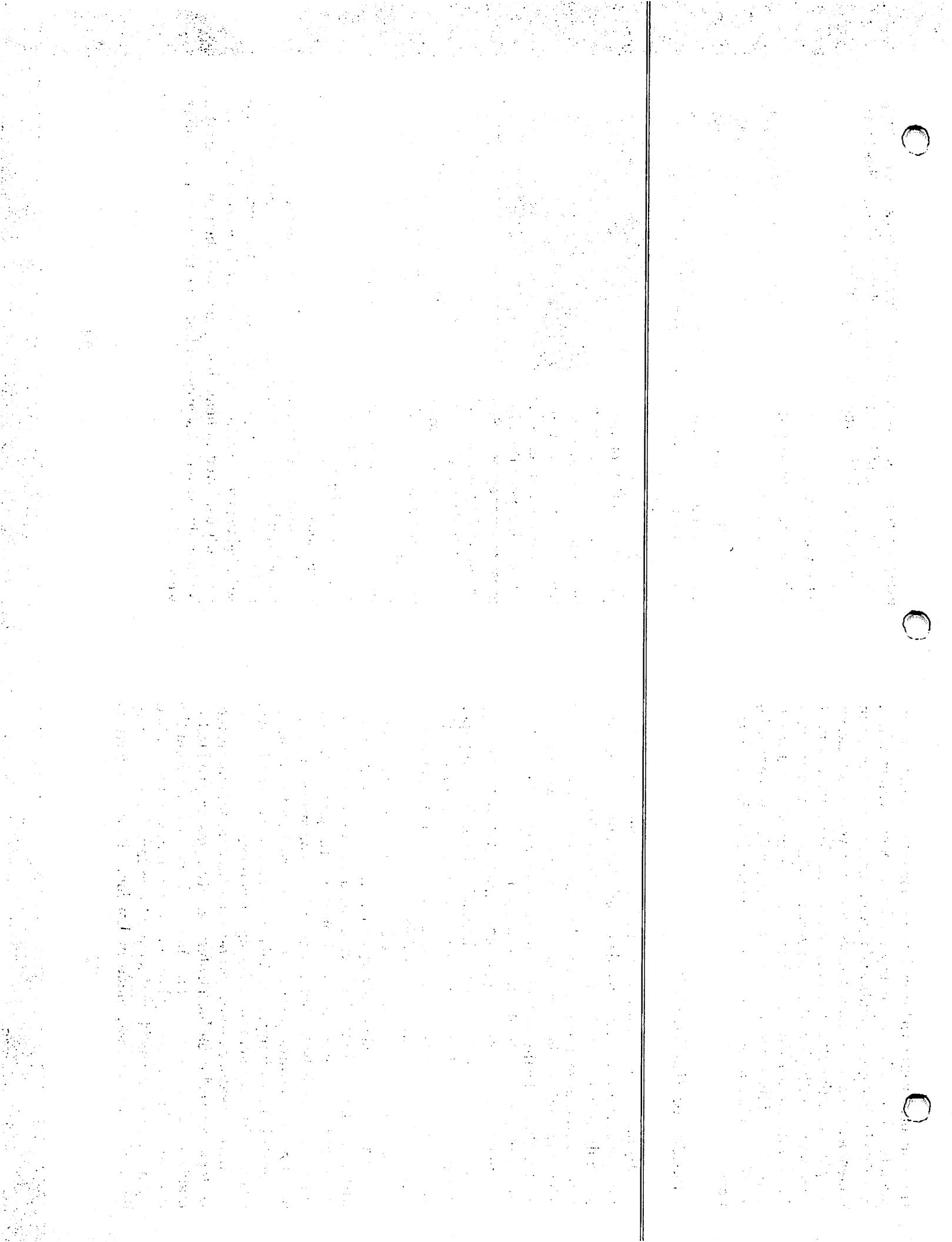
### The Field Mice Would Beat us Back to the House

The little field mice also found our warm house inviting in the winter-time and moved into the walls. We could generally hear the pitter-patter of little feet running around above us. Mother waged war against them with traps that looked like cells or houses that permitted ingress but not egress. She would send my brother and me out to drown the prisoners. But we, being fond of the little mice, would take them to the bottom of the lot and let them out. Then, to quote my mother, "they would beat us back to the house."

We always had a mother cat and her current brood of kittens for pets and to help wage war against the mice. Since my brother and I adored cats, the place was overrun with them because we so hated to give the kittens away. We loved to take our kittens to bed with us, loved to hear them purr, and their nice warmth. Mother always had to search our beds and remove our pets after we went to sleep.

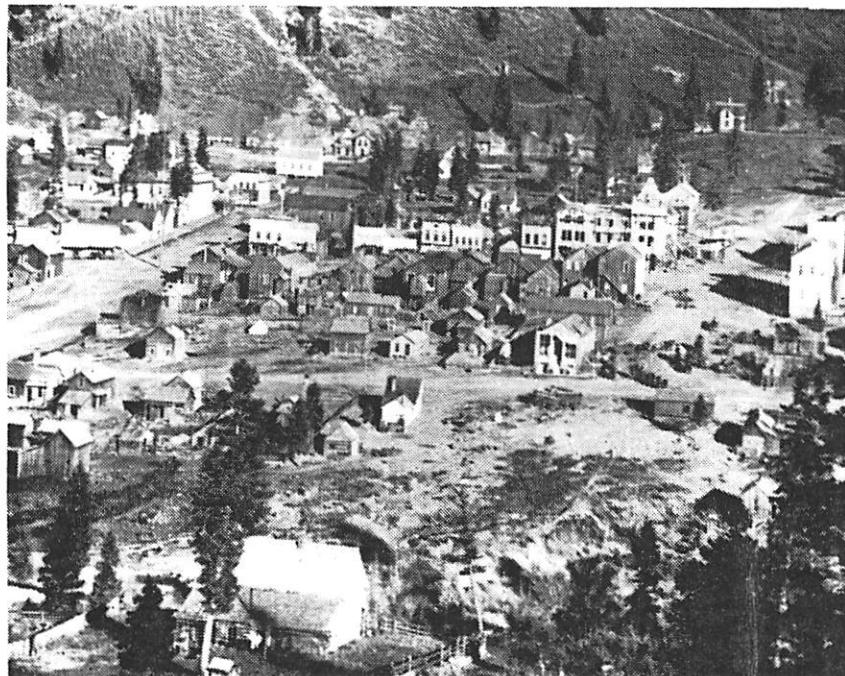


Leigh Block at age 4 1/2 and her brother, Willie at age 2 1/2, taken by an itinerant photographer. (Anderson, Rockford, Ill.) (Block-Turner collection)



## Gyp Was the Pet of My Childhood

I should mention here that the pet of my childhood that came first in my affections was my dog, Gyp. He was a black and white sort of shepherd type dog, long hair, with a ruff around his neck and a short tail. He was given to me when I was about a year old, and we grew up together. He was the constant guardian and



An enlarged sector from Jackson's picture of 1886 (pages 8, 9) revealing lines of burros from the stables moving up to Hartwell's warehouse to receive their packs for the trip to the mines. (Colorado Historical Society)

playmate of my childhood. When we moved to Salt Lake City in 1892, he moved with us, and died a year or so later from old age.

We had a canary whose cage hung among the flowers and plants in our big bay window. He always greeted us with a burst of song. He was, I think, a descendant of the pair of canaries that

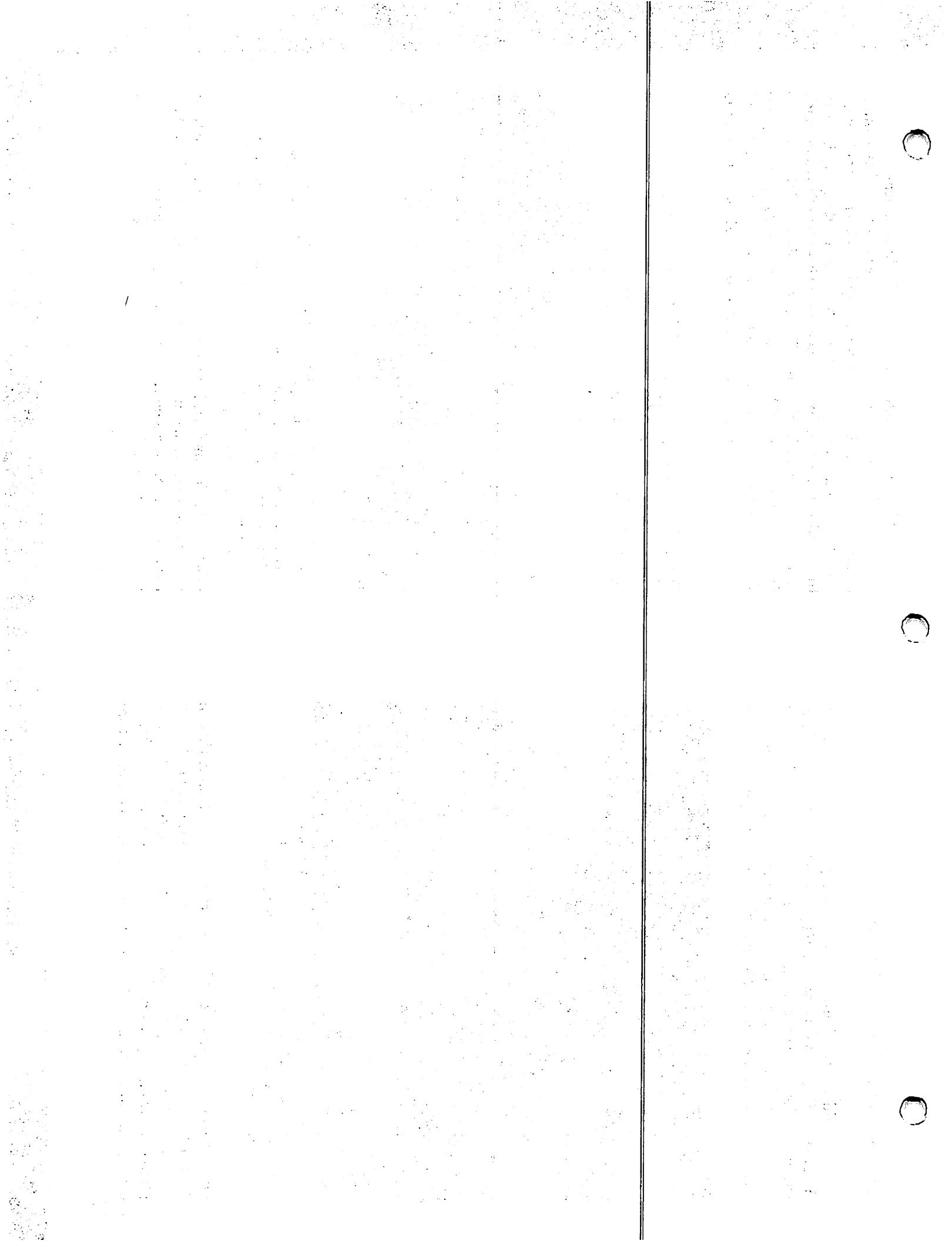
the bride brought in and carried over the hard places!

We each owned a burro. He usually was acquired as a small colt and was raised by us without discipline. Speaking of burros, it is surprising what a load a small burro could drag up the trail to the mines. He was first harnessed with a sort of wooden pack saddle over a saddle blanket. Then long pieces of timber were fastened on each side of his saddle, the back ends dragging, and the front ends quite hiding his head! In between was loaded all sorts of things from canned food and cooking utensils to mining



Here a few years later, this mode of transportation continues. A burro train loaded with lumber departs from the Hartwell warehouse on the right at the intersection (Second Street and Fifth Avenue) for Vinegar Hill and the mines on beyond. The building on the immediate right has been identified as the old telephone building. (Colorado Historical Society)

machinery. The pack train would start out single file up the trail. It would be seen from time to time from the town below as the burros rounded the turns on the mountain. The poor patient beasts plodded along until they reached their destination where they





A group of burros rustling food, near Oak Street, above the railroad at the north end of Ouray. (Denver Public Library, Western History Department)

were unloaded down to the saddle and then turned loose to make their way back to town and their stable.

The burros generally rustled their food on the way, which meant that each householder had to build a stout fence about his home if he desired to raise flowers or vegetables, or even keep his place neat. The burros were like a horde of locusts!

My father built a barn or shelter on the lower part of our lot where we housed our burros and mother's beautiful horse, Button, a large grey- and white-mottled horse who rode like a rocking chair. My mother was a fine horsewoman, always rode side saddle, and looked so handsome in her tailored riding habit, which was made with a tight fitting basque, long sleeves, and buttons straight up the front.

### Little "Clown Burro"

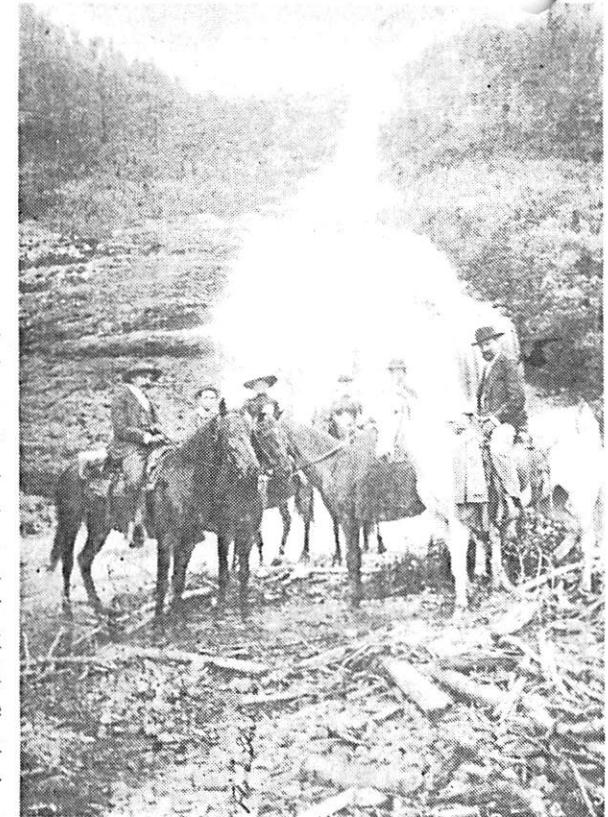
Our neighbor's boy took care of the barn for father. He saw that our animals were fed and kept clean. One winter morning a few days before Christmas, he came to the kitchen door, breaking trail through a deep snow. He was carrying in his arms a little baby burro. He was black with a white face and looked then, as he always did, like a little clown. He delighted us more than

our tree and all its gifts. We had figured it out this way: Santa knew he would

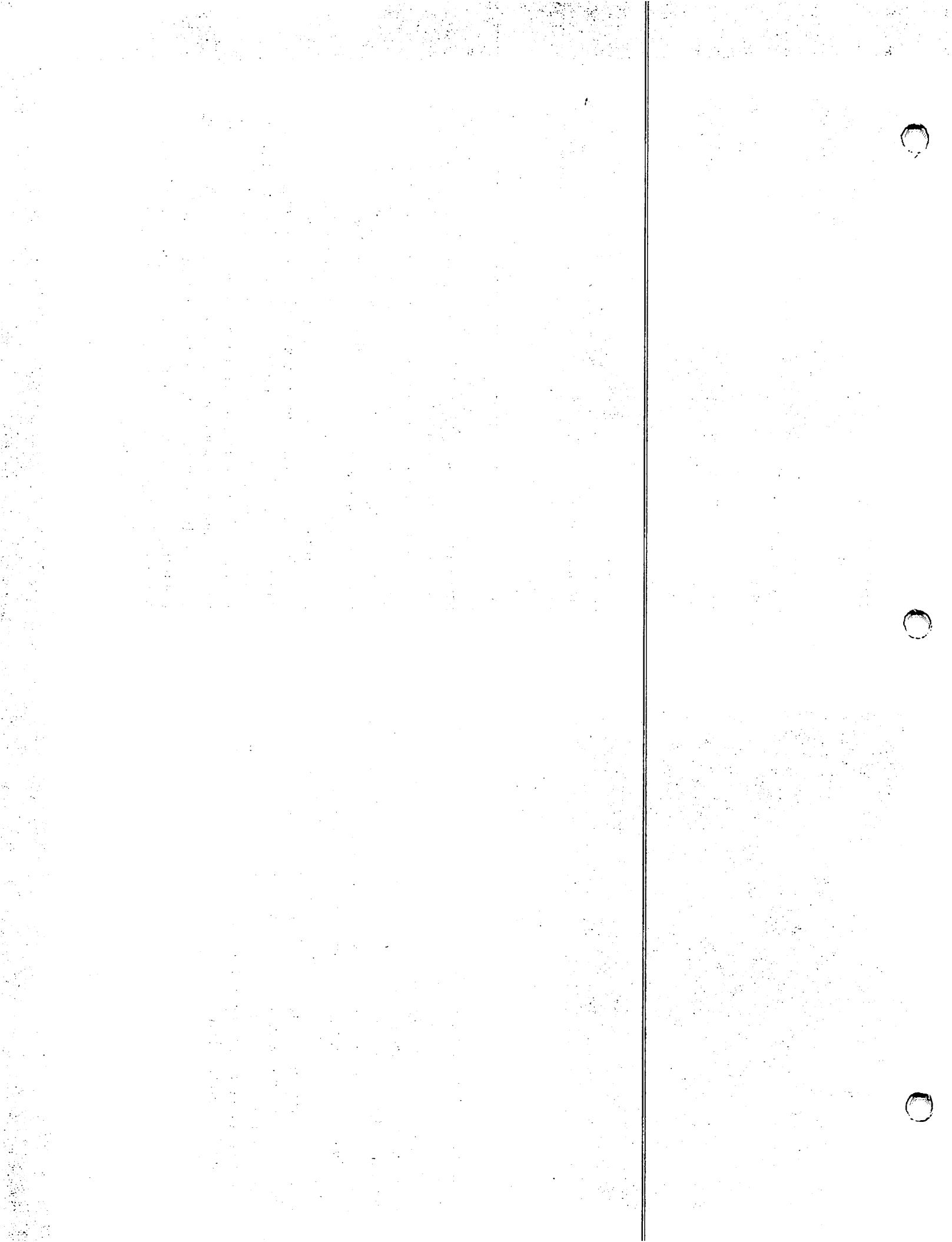
not have room for the little burro in his sleigh on Christmas Eve.

So he brought him to us a few days ahead of time!

Our little clown grew like a weed. He was bigger than a Newfoundland dog by summertime. He insisted on going everywhere we went and would raise a dreadful racket if he got separated from his mother. He chewed everything that he could close his mouth on, the saddle strap, the rein, the saddle blankets, even the tassel of his mother's tail! We never did succeed in breaking him to harness. Father had to put a dividing fence between the back and front yards in order to keep him out of mother's flower garden.



Leigh's mother, third from the left, was a fine horsewoman and is seen here at the base of one of the many falls with a party of sightseers. (Block-Turner collection)



too long. But we were delighted when one of them bloomed. The yard was studded with pine trees. Also in ages past big boulders had fallen from the almost perpendicular mountains around us. No boulder ever fell down during the time we lived in Ouray, but we were constantly expecting it!

One big boulder was about six feet in diameter—sticking out of the ground four or five feet. It was lodged just outside the window of the room father built for my brother and me. Willie, like all the boys of the town, delighted in collecting the drills the miners discarded when they got too short. With these the boys spent hours trying to drill holes in the big rocks. One boy would hold the drill, turning it in its hole as the other boy brought a sledge hammer down with all the strength he could muster. Why there were not more smashed hands than there were, I can't figure out! They tried to train me to turn the drill, but I was too afraid of the hammer. My cousin, Jeanne, on the other hand, became very proficient at it. When we left Ouray, our old boulder looked like a salt cellar. Oh yes, it was the favorite perch of our clown burro, who would climb up on the boulder early in the morning and put his head almost in the window, braying at the top of his lungs for us to get up and come out to play with him!

### Treasures of the Assay Office

Down the street from our house was an assay office with a large dump at the side where discarded ores and crucibles were piled. Some of these crucibles, in the form of little cups or saucers, were lined with the most beautiful colors when they came from the furnace — beautiful blues, greens, yellows, and rich browns.

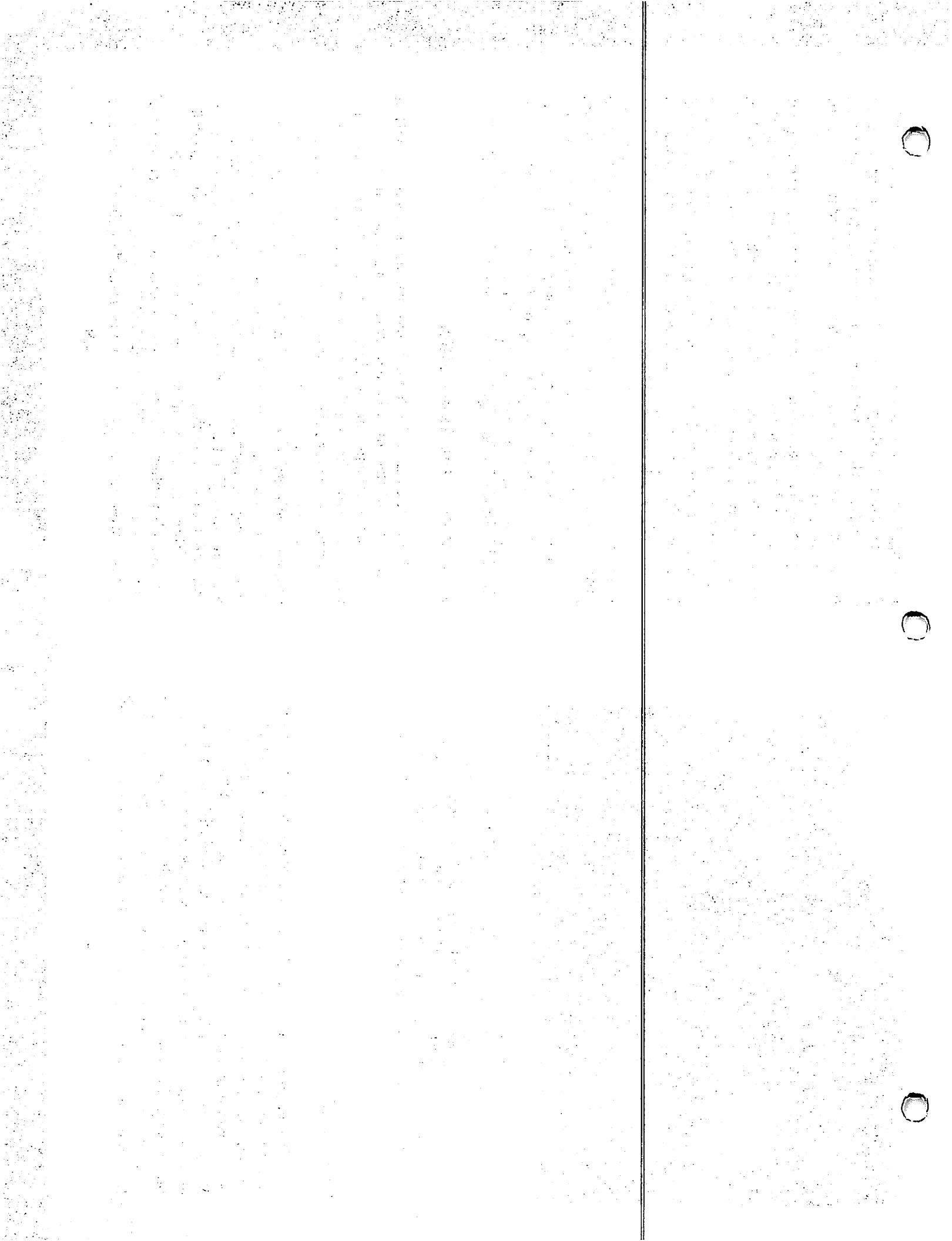
We children hunted these crucibles with great enthusiasm, compared collections, exchanged and bartered with each other as if they were postage stamps. We must have been a big nuisance to the assayers because the crucibles were very hot when they were dumped. Yet, they had a hard time keeping us away until it was safe for us to handle them. These little crucibles we used for everything—for dishes, at our tea parties, vases for our flowers, etc. We also collected mineral specimens, beautiful crystals of quartz, iron pyrite, which looked "just like gold," etc. Every man in town was interested in a mine or mine "diggin's," and their



What is going on here might be hypothesized as follows: The girls are visitors from the east whose parents want a picture of them riding a burro! The younger girl on the left with the fearsome expression is holding onto the burro's ears for "dear life," while the older girl on the right has grabbed the tail to stabilize herself, but she has no idea what to do with the switch in her left hand! The burro, it is clear, is totally unperturbed by these goings on. (Colorado Historical Society)

### The Boulders

The mountain soil around our home was rich in everything that flowers need. Everyone succeeded in raising a showplace garden. Our place was fenced in by a sturdy wide-board fence, the boards running horizontal from post to post and painted white. My mother loved pansies, so the yard was filled with them instead of grass. Among the pansies she grew red silk poppies, very fragile but so beautiful, white baby's breath, English daisies, forget-me-nots, mignonettes, and some lovely tea roses. These roses had to be replanted almost every year because the winters were cold and



pockets were always bulging with pieces of ore or "near ore" that they had picked up. These samples eventually were passed on to us. I can remember that the pieces of petrified wood in our collection intrigued me the most of all.

Jess and I had set up "housekeeping" in our backyard. My father had converted a large piano box into a playhouse for us. The lid was raised on hinges. With props it made a front porch over a big window. A door opened on the end, and two other windows were cut on the sides. A floor was laid, and shelves built. We made curtains for the windows, spread our collections on the shelves, put the dolls to bed in their cribs along the walls inside and used little boxes for chairs and tables. It was fun to play post office occasionally, going out and receiving mail through the window and converting the shelves into letter boxes. As I remember, there was always some rivalry about the low numbers—box No. 1 being especially sought after! Our other playmates of the neighborhood always shared this game. When we got tired of writing letters to each other, we would again concentrate our attention on our collections. And, what collections we amassed! At times, though, the playhouse was the scene of pitched battles when Jeanne and Willie assaulted it and we attempted to keep them from gaining entrance!

In several places down near the river, hot springs bubbled up (some of them quite hot)—heavily tinged with sulphur.<sup>5</sup> It was quite a fad for people to drink these waters for medicinal purposes. Someone told us that if we added pepper and salt, the water would taste just like chicken broth. We gagged down many a cupful trying to prove this to ourselves!

And I can't refrain from mentioning again the beautiful wild flowers we picked in the meadows down by the river. The lovely crocuses, first flowers of spring, large and velvety, purple or lavender, and sometimes white.

<sup>5</sup>-The waters of the hot springs were strong in calcites but contained no sulphur.

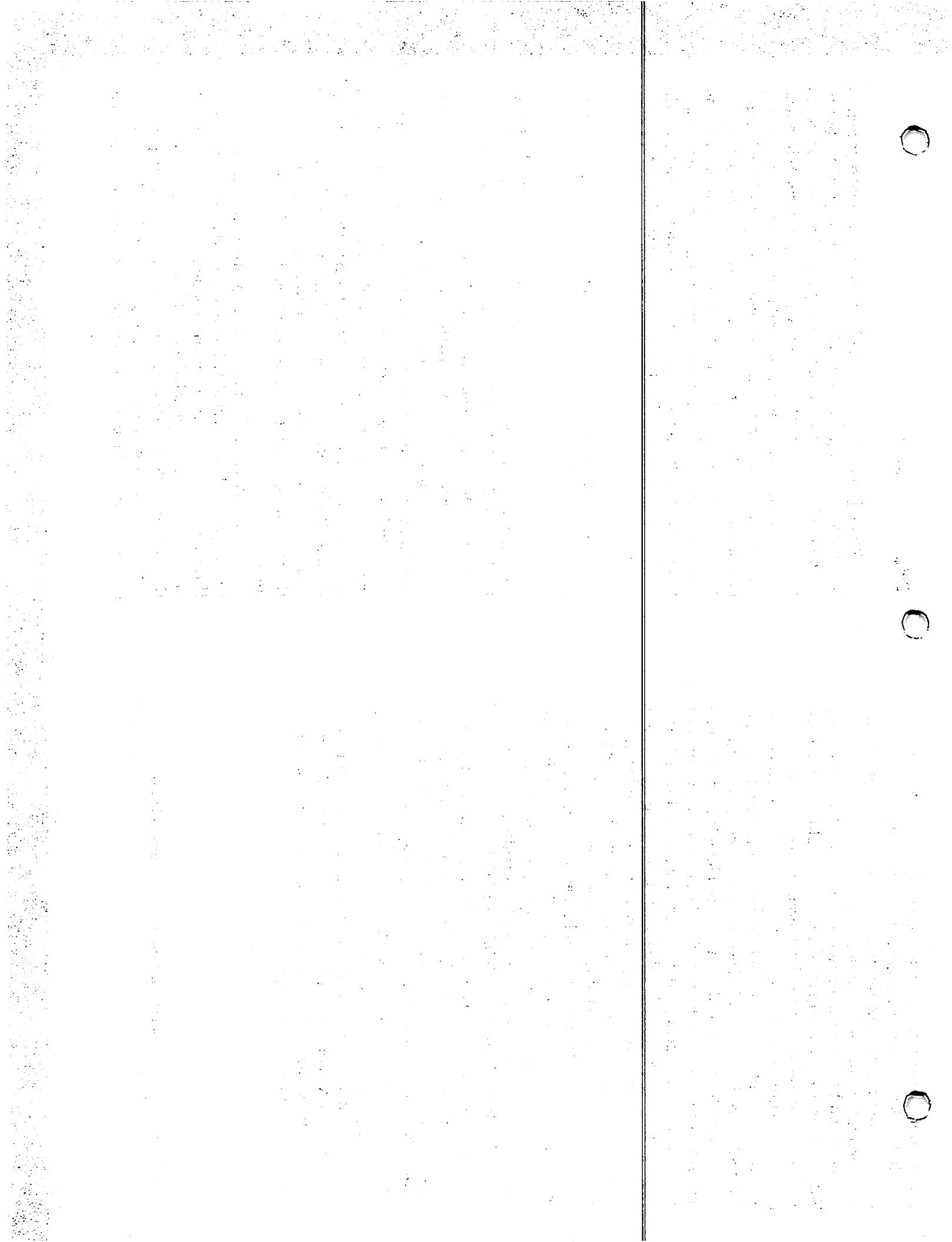
## Trip to St. Louis

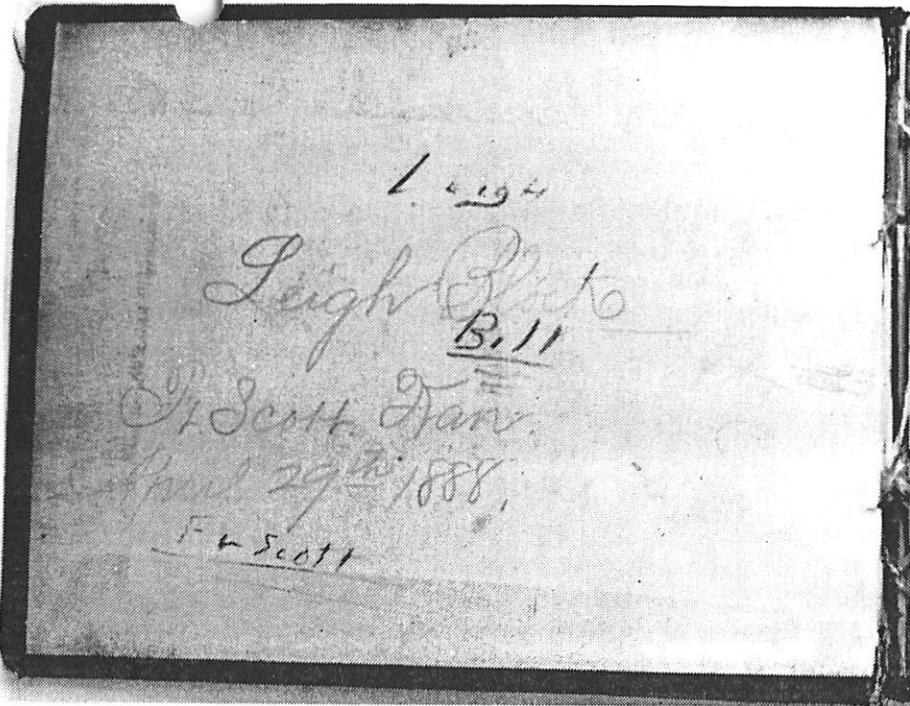
When I was still a very small girl, my father had occasion to be a witness in a mining suit in St. Louis. He begged mother to let him take me with him since his people had never seen his children. She would have gone also, but my brother Willie was just recovering from pneumonia and they were afraid to risk the trip for him. So my father and I set out, shortly after Christmas, on our big adventure. At that time, the railroad did not extend beyond Montrose. So we got up early in the morning and rode on the stage that far. Father was walking me up and down the platform trying to keep me awake until the train pulled in. He suddenly realized that I felt very strange away from my mountains!

He says I put it this way, "Daddy, it just seems that this place is all sky!"

To amuse me he had laid in a supply of small sketchbooks and colored crayon pencils and I drew happily all the way to St. Louis ---wonderful things like engines, train cars, and two story houses which I had never seen before. We reached St. Louis in the evening. It was raining softly so that everything was reflected in the wet pavements. I saw my first street car (cable car, then) and rode in my first "hack." These hacks were the ancestors of our taxis and were quite impressive with their fine upholstery, horses, and the driver who sat in a seat outside above us. I can still remember vividly one or two things: the lights shining through the big vases of colored liquid that hung in the drug store windows and their reflections in the wet pavements below, and the colored lights that distinguished one line of streetcars from another.

Grandfather Block and his family were living at the time in a beautiful old home in one of St. Louis's suburbs. This house was three stories high, with a square roof and dormer windows. A lovely staircase, with a polished continuous stair rail, ran from the third floor down to the front hall. Some of the young people who swarmed over the house were always daring the others to slide down from the top, quite a hazardous feat by the time you



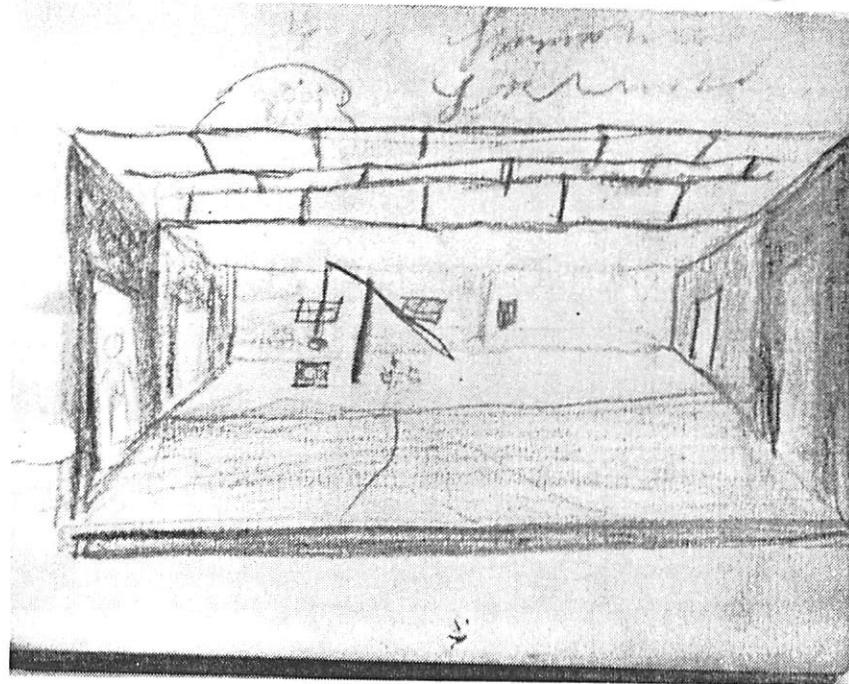


These two pages from Leigh's sketch book bought for her by her father on April 29, 1888 in Fort Scott, Kansas on the train trip home from St. Louis. (Block-Turner collection)

got to the bottom. Woe to you if you had not posted someone there to catch you! Outside, a circular driveway, leading past the front entrance, enclosed a circular piece of lawn. In the center was an old fountain. It was no longer in use, but the many rains kept the lower basin well filled and it was a wonderful place to wade.

### My Sixth Birthday

My father was detained in St. Louis by postponement of the law suit until late in the spring, so I was still with Grandfather and Grandmother on my sixth birthday (April 9, 1888). To my lasting shame I did not seem to miss home and mother as I should have. I was quite intrigued with the life going on about me! Most of Grandmother's brood were in their teens, a very merry crew, who attracted other young people like honey attracts flies. We all had roller skates. I can still see some of these relatives: Aunt Kit,

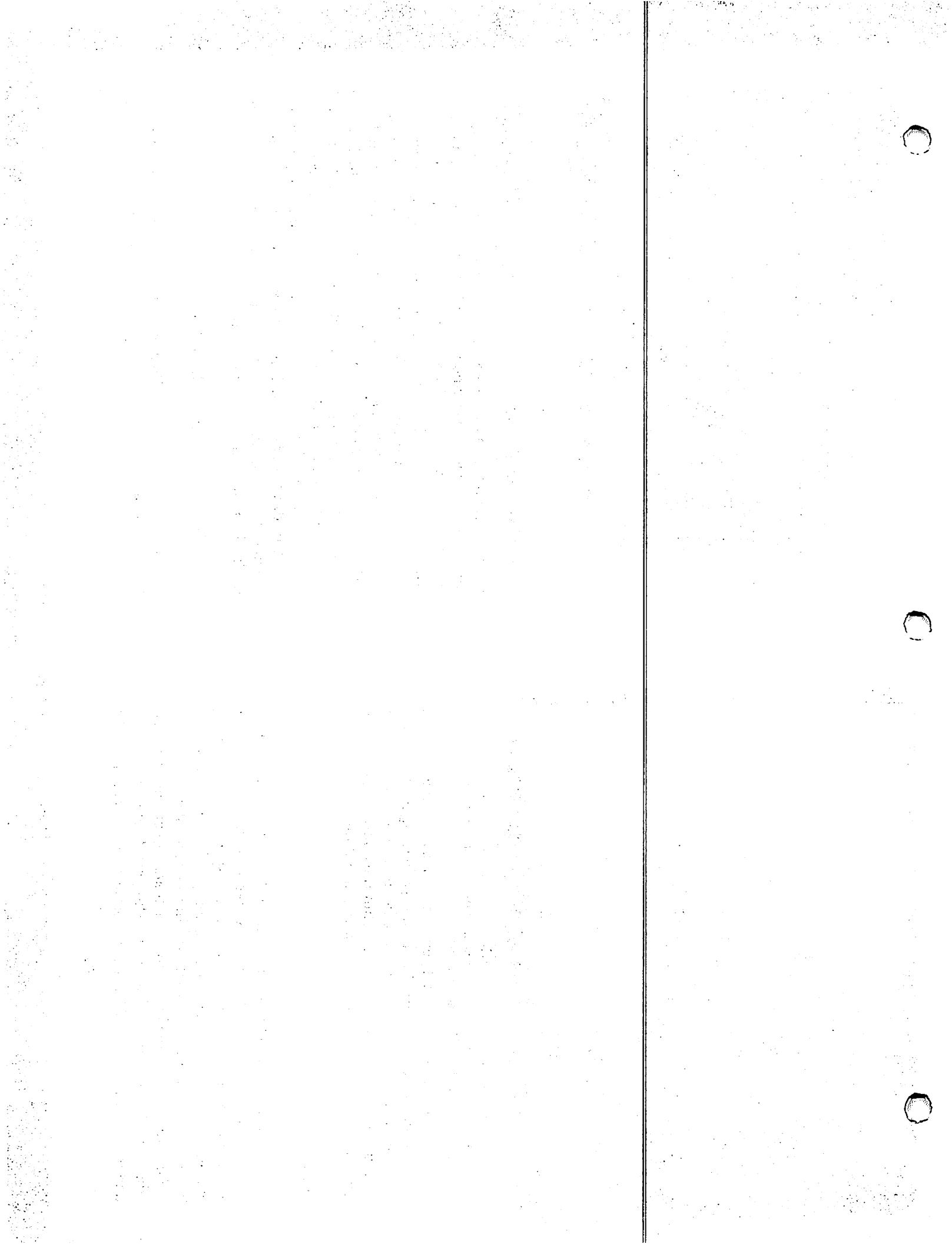


with her deep set blue eyes and mop of black curly hair tied at the neck with a broad cherry ribbon; Aunt Mary, with her madonna-like face and eyes, who liked to dispel the illusion occasionally with a few "cuss words"; two young uncles who were still children and who played with me and lorded it over me, too. One room on the third floor was set aside as a playroom where we skated and romped. The noise must have been deafening. I wore little white pinafores over my woolen dresses and the boys would pretend I was their horse. Using the sashes of the pinafores as reins, they would drive me all over the house. It was a bit hard on pinafores.

One day they came rushing in from school to get me and take me about a block from home to see a "donkey." When we came back, Grandmother asked me if I liked it.

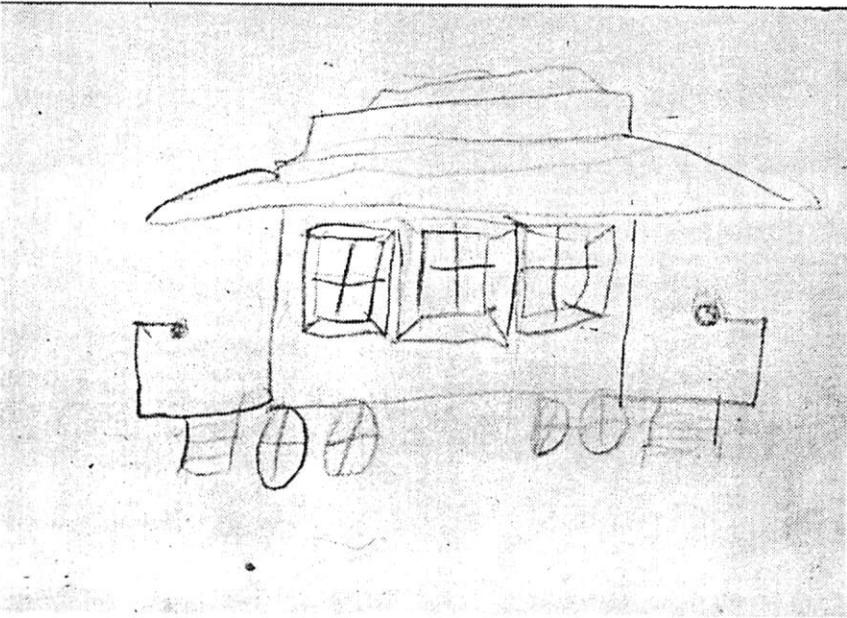
"All it was was an old burro!" I said.

We had a wonderful Easter that year. Armed with a big Easter basket, I found Easter eggs all over the place, even in the



basin of the big outside fountain which was no longer in use. Everyone celebrated my sixth birthday a week later. One gift, very much cherished, was a little jointed doll with brown hair and eyes. It came apart unexpectedly one day to my dismay, but we sent it to the hospital and it came back well.

The game Keno® (something on the order of lotto) was all the rage that winter. Every evening as soon as the dinner dishes could be cleared away, the big black walnut table in the dining



Leigh's memory of a St. Louis cable car. (Block-Turner collection)

room was bared and the Keno cards were laid out. Sometimes there would be more than twenty players around the table. I can still hear the shouts of laughter and excitement when someone called "Keno." Always, someone would produce a box of tutti-frutti gum. In those days it came in little straw boxes which I loved to collect. The sticks, half as long as now, were packed six to a bundle, wrapped in tinfoil and tied with a ribbon, then packed in the little straw box. The big boxes contained about a dozen of the little ones and I loved to collect both. These straw boxes were

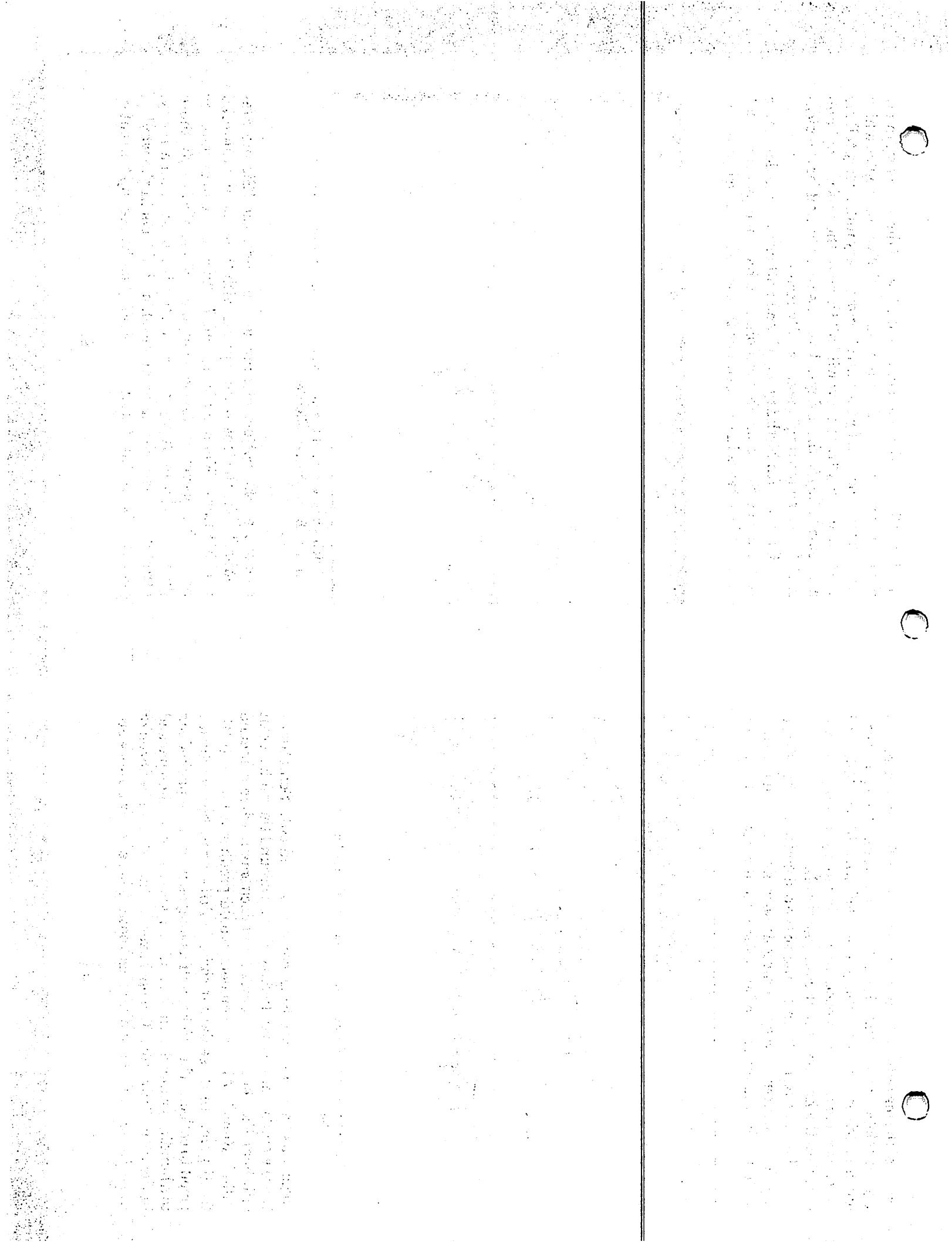
made in China. Also associated with the old dining room, in my memory, were its cheerful grate, the smell of winter apples which Grandfather bought by the barrel, and hickory nuts. They tell me that the hickory trees grew wild all through the Mississippi and Missouri valley in those days. The nuts could be had for the picking! "Let's go nutting" meant a jolly picnic.

On my sixth birthday, my Grandmother took me down to a very famous St. Louis photographer "to have me picture took." He posed me twice in the positions that were assumed by the two



Leigh's impression of the mountains that surrounded her Ouray home. (Block-Turner collection)

cherubs at the bottom of Raphael's picture, the "Sistine Madonna." Later he took several prizes with these pictures entered in exhibitions. When my father and I returned to Ouray, mother at once had a crayon enlargement made of one picture. In those days no parlor in Ouray was complete without such an atrocity, ornately framed, sitting on an easel, and always in the way! A year or so before, an itinerant photographer had set up his tent in



Ouray. Our mother and Aunt Jen had taken all the children down. He posed us, then clamped some sort of metal brace to our heads to keep us from moving. Then, having thrown a black velvet scarf over his head and camera, he waved a little black bell back and forth with his right hand to keep our attention, saying, "Listen to the bell, bell, belie!" The result was just what you could expect.



## Winters in Ouray

The winters in Ouray were long. The snow came early and at times was very deep. The men struggled to keep the sidewalks clean and at times we seemed literally to walk through tunnels. When we had to go "up town" or anywhere else, even the fences seemed to vanish. After each new snow storm, the landscape about us assumed a new, almost mysterious look. One thing of all that I remember about winter was the beauty of the snow crystals. They seemed to freeze instead of melt when they fell. Every pine bough would sparkle with them! I used to study with delight those that fell or froze on the arms of my furry woolly coat. We children loved to get out and mar all the smooth whiteness. We had a lot of fun playing in the snow. But, oh what a task our mother had getting us ready to go out!

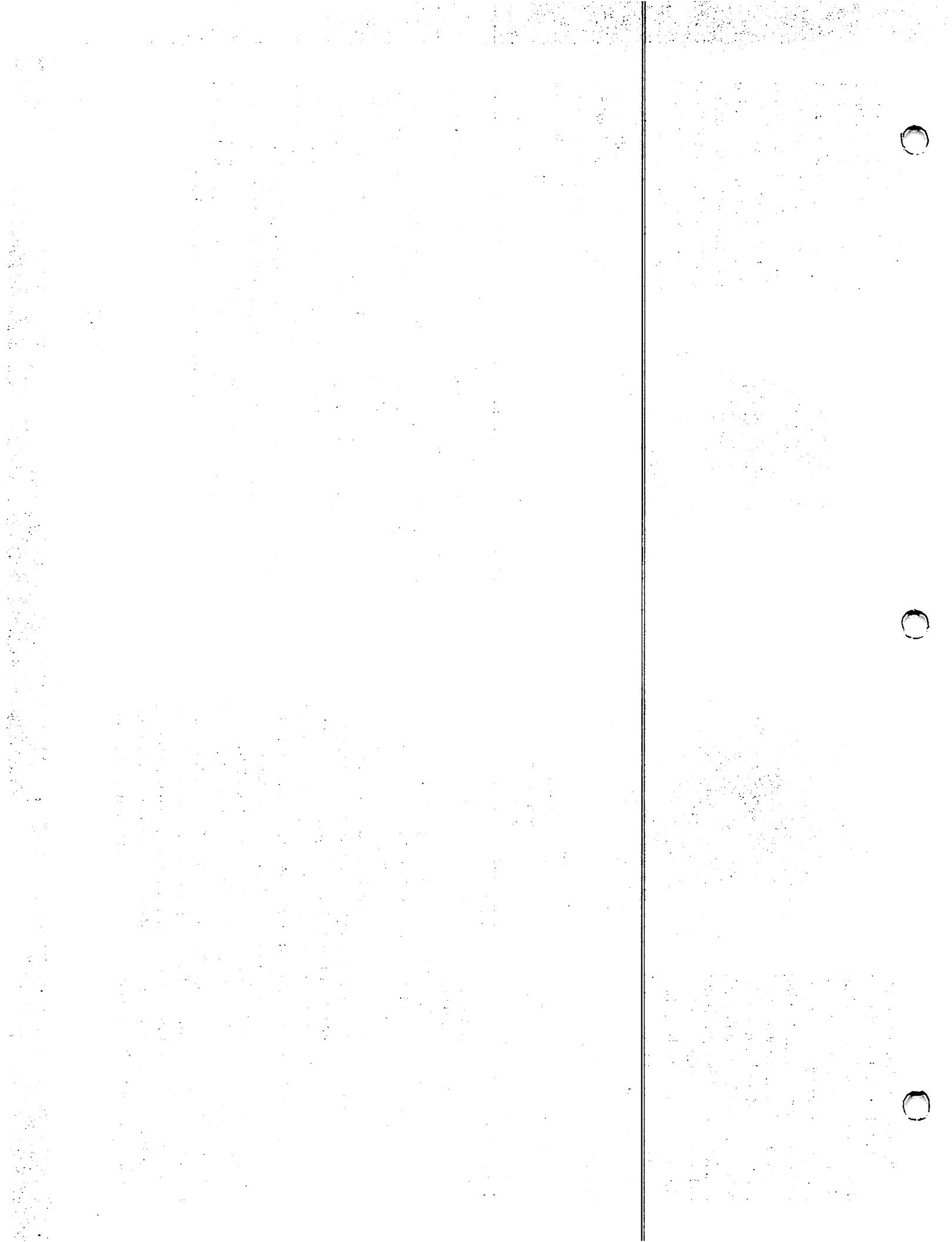
To begin with, children wore at all times of the year so many more clothes than the lucky child of today. For instance, the following is what I wore at five when I went out to play in the snow. First, a fleece-lined union suit with a let down seat (how I hated that union suit!); then a pantywaist complete with hundreds of buttons. This, of course, buttoned up the back and I had



(F. W. Guerin, St. Louis) (Block-Turner collection)

came soiled or mussed (quite often in my case). I wore all of the above clothing in the house during the daytime! When we finally persuaded my mother to let us go out and play in the snow, she first drew on heavy woven leggings which buttoned up on the sides and like a pair of trousers were held in place by an elastic around my waist. Then came the galoshes, quite high affairs, with four or five buckles up the front. Then a heavy woolen coat, generally trimmed with fur at the neck and wrists. A long cord was drawn through the sleeves at the ends of which were mittens. A wool cap was pulled down over our heads. A big wool scarf was put around the neck several times, crisscrossed, and tied beneath our arms in back. Then the door was opened and we could go out. The first thing we did was to throw ourselves flat against a snow bank, rotating our arms vertically above our heads and down to our waist. Then we would call for help so that the "imprint" wouldn't be marred! We thought these imprints looked like butterflies. Snow angels, we sometimes called them.

to have assistance. Fas-tened to this pantywaist was a garter belt, flannel petticoat (generally knitted by mother), and then a white petticoat heavily trimmed with embroidery. Heavy ribbed stockings (black or brown) were pulled over the legs of the union suit (what a task to get those smooth at the ankles) and held up by the garters. Then came the woolen dress. Mine was generally blue serge, trimmed with white braid. Over this, I wore a white pinafore which was changed as often as it be-



Some days when the wind had been blowing, the crust on the snow was strong enough to hold us up. It was so much fun walking on the snow, until we struck a soft spot and almost disappeared from view. We had sleds, too. We would lay out a coasting course across the yard since we were not allowed to go out into the street. The road was like glass, which built up as the winter progressed because all the supply and delivery wagons were put on runners. The older young people of the town ignored the danger and had quite a long bobsled run. It started up on Vinegar Hill and ran straight down toward the river until it reached our corner. Here it turned and ran a mile or so to the lower part of town. Sometimes the bobsleds didn't make the turn and since we were the nearest house, the victims were brought in for first aid. Some of them were quite badly hurt.

Above town, on what was later known as the "Million Dollar Highway", the snow would accumulate in one area until it was necessary to blast a tunnel through the solid ice to keep the road open. The "ice tunnel" in the middle of the summer used to intrigue our summer visitors.

## We Rode Astride

I have spoken before of our burros. Most of us had saddles for our mounts and knew how to put them on, but the smart old burros would swell up when we were saddling. Then after we got on, the cinch would be too loose and over the saddle would turn. Most of us therefore rode by preference on small blankets secured with broad surcings. To our mother's embarrassment, all of us small girls insisted upon riding astride. There were several pretty lakes near town. Often we would collect a chaperone and plenty of eats and off we would go for a picnic. That was fine, but some of the grown-ups got the idea, too. By that time, most of the homes had visitors from the East in the summertime. The ladies thought it lots of fun to borrow our burros for their picnics. This left us at home without our usual playmates, the burros. The burros were on our side though, for they were balky and uncooperative when the ladies tried to ride them.

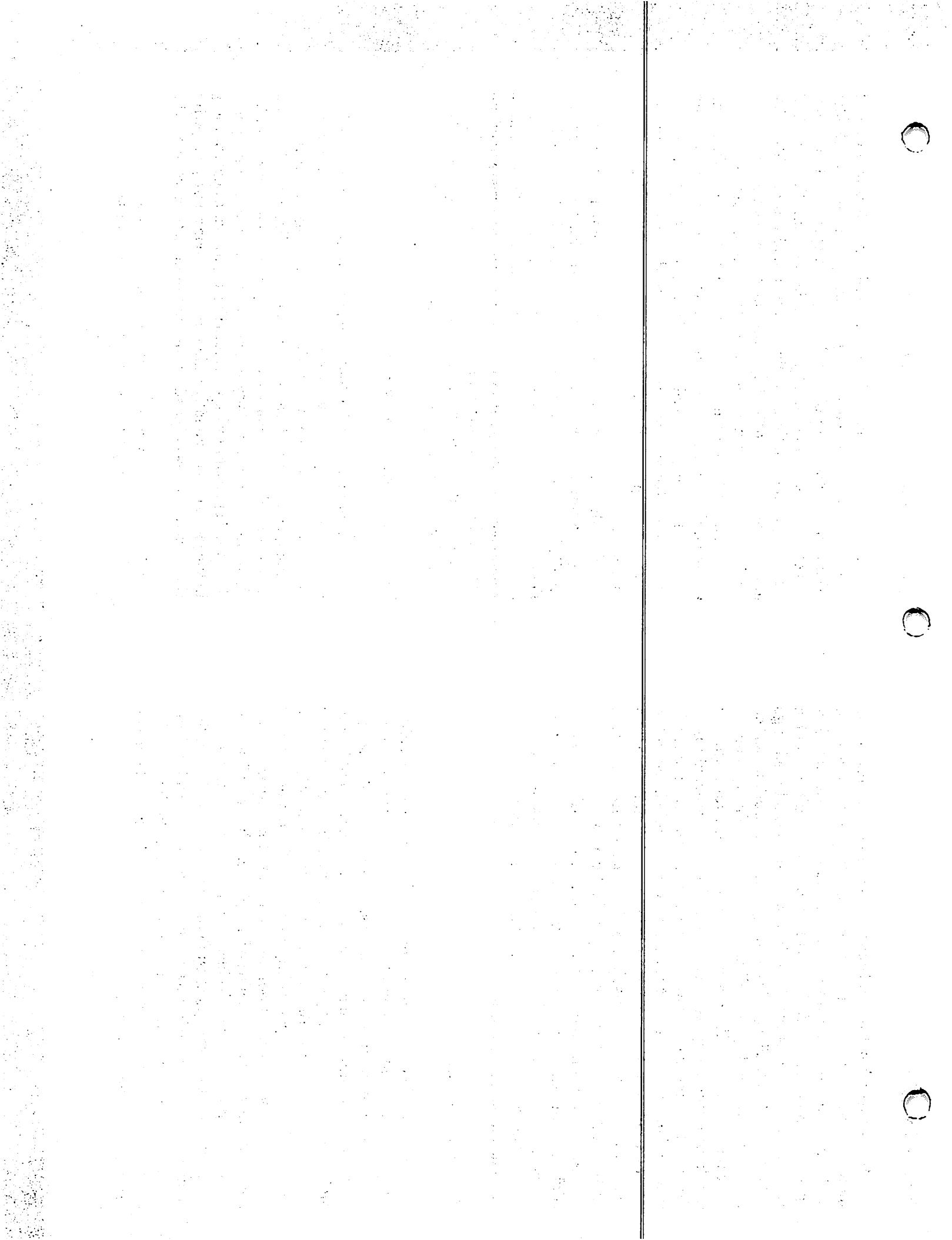
I have often spoken of the doll family that Jess and I loved and cared for. Jeanne had to get into our play somehow. So she assumed the character of "Dr. Jenks," who was called up when any of the dolls showed the slightest indisposition. She furnished a bottle of vile smelling medicine and bread crumb pills. We administered these to the dolls who almost always made a speedy recovery. But one time they got so sick that Dr. Jenks couldn't cure them. She announced that they had all died. Then she assumed the character of the undertaker and held a service and buried all of our poor darlings. That night it rained and it was several days before our parents discovered "our loss" and investigated. The poor dolls were never quite the same after the resurrection.

One day "Dr. Jenks" discovered a boy going from house to house, leaving envelopes beneath the doors. Each contained one small pink pill and much propaganda regarding its beneficial use! Following the boy at a discrete distance, "Dr. Jenks" managed to collect most of the samples he was distributing. The pills were sugar coated so she used Jess and me for patients instead of the dolls! I don't know how many we took before we became dreadfully sick and the grown-ups discovered what was going on. "Dr. Jenks" went permanently "out of business" right then and there.

## The Dangerous Chickens

Mother and Aunt Jen had a very dear friend who lived below town in the valley. She was a Mrs. Day.<sup>6</sup> Her husband was editor of the local paper and was also the local Indian agent. Their farm, although not very wide, extended about two miles down the creek and was a delightful place to visit. They had three boys a bit older than we and a young-lady daughter who owned a calico pony. Jess and I spent many happy hours there gathering eggs, helping in the garden, occasionally riding the calico pony, and going with the boys to the lower meadows in the evenings to drive home the

6-Mrs. David (Victoria Sophie) Day. Her husband's newspaper was *The Solid Muldroon*, but he was not a local Indian agent.



cows. The boys often put each of us on a cow and let us ride back to the barn. We loved everything on the farm except the chickens. We were afraid of them because one time when we arrived, two hens with their broods were strutting about the yard. I made a quick grab at one of the little puff-balls. The hen flew at me, but missed because I ducked with the result that the hen hit Jess in the face just below the eyes. We learned our lesson for all time. We had nothing to do with chickens after that.

One time I spent a weekend there without Jess. Mr. Day drove me home early Monday morning. With us was a man from Denver. Mr. Day was driving a young highbred horse which he thought he could handle all right. Everything went well until we reached town and met a loud braying burro emerging from an alley. The horse stood straight up in the shafts, then bolted up the road. Mr. Day held onto the reins, but the man who was holding me fell out on his back, still holding me. I made more noise than the burro as they carried me home. I announced loudly that I was killed and that I wanted "Pond's Extract." This was a mild mixture of witch hazel which mother always used on our bruises and cuts. But the kind man who had saved my life was badly hurt.

## Ouray's Biggest Drunk

Ouray had the usual collection of alcoholics and ne'er do wells. There were amusing stories told about some of them.

One young man by the name of Stoddard, an Englishman, well educated in the law but definitely an alcoholic, had chosen his friends and clients from among the alcoholics of the town. Stod owned a log cabin on Main Street. The front part he used for an office, and the back as living quarters. One night a bunch of his cronies had gathered there with a bottle or two and all managed to get well lit. Stod was the first to pass out and they laid him on the table, remarking what a nice corpse he made. Stod had one glass eye. Someone melted wax over the eye socket and stuck a candle in it. They lit a number of the other candles and put them around the "corpse." Then each one wended his wobbly way home. A passerby noticed the strange light coming from the window, investigated in time to save Stod's life.

Then there was the old doctor, well-schooled in his profession, but whose past was unknown and who seemed to live mostly on coffee and whiskey. The men of the town swore that he knew more about medicine when he was drunk than the young doctor knew when he was sober. One afternoon a rancher and his wife were sitting on their porch. The doctor came driving his wobbly buggy down the road toward them. The old argument came up again as to his fitness to practice medicine when drunk. The wife proposed that she jump into bed and that the husband call the doctor in to see what was the matter with her. The old doctor staggered up the pathway and into the bedroom. He threw his arm about the bedpost to steady himself, fumbled for her wrist to take her pulse. He managed to get his own pulse. A puzzled expression came over his face.

He announced, "By cracky, woman, you're drunk."

Ouray's biggest "drunk" occurred on the night of the Dixon House fire. Ouray was very proud of its volunteer fire department. They built a nice brick building near the court house. The bright red engine was resplendent with brass. It was drawn by ropes long enough to enable 20 or 30 men to pull it. My Uncle Will was fire chief and made a very dashing figure with his big black hat and brass speaking trumpet hanging from his neck. A large brass gong announced to the whole valley any fire alarms that came in.

It was about 10 o'clock on a wintry night<sup>7</sup> when the Dixon House was discovered to be on fire. The fire was out of control before the fire department arrived. The seasoned logs together with the kegs of liquor stored in the bar made wonderful fuel. The flames shot up 40 or 50 feet and lit up the whole valley. The firemen had to confine their effort to saving the surrounding property and even the town. The night was so cold that the water froze as it drizzled down the hose from the nozzle. Some

<sup>7</sup>-The final Dixon House fire actually occurred during the summer. The *San Juan Silverite* reported two fires during 1892. The first on June 4th damaged the kitchen and the apartment above it. The second on July 30th was discovered at about 8:30 p.m. and rapidly enveloped the whole structure. By 12:30 a.m. only a few blackened beams remained.



A view along Fourth Street looking north across Sixth Avenue in the mid-1880's. The Dixon House is the two story building with dormer windows on the far left. The residence of W. S. Home is on the immediate left. (Ruth Gregory collection)

helpful soul raided the saloons and filled a gallon pail with whiskey. With a ladle, he went from one fireman to another giving each a drink. The fire finally burned out at six o'clock in the morning. The weary volunteers wended their ways home. Their loyal wives gave them baths and put them to bed. It took about two days to sober them up.

### The Success of Pinafore

Perhaps you wonder what children did in those faraway days for amusement before there were moving pictures, radios, and television. The people of Ouray were very resourceful. One of the most resourceful was a little woman, Mrs. Carson, of German background, who had a fine musical education. She attempted to teach music to the young hopefuls who had pianos.

Mrs. Carson had been agitating for some time with fellow members in the community to build an "opery" house. This

could be used as a dance hall and also as a playhouse, to house such minstrel shows and traveling entertainers as came to town, or for amateur theatricals. The idea met with eager response and before long the "opery" house was an actual fact. The ground floor was rented to stores. A broad wooden stairway led to the "auditorium," which had a fairly good stage and a highly polished floor. Kitchen chairs were used for seats. These were arranged about the edges of the room when the floor was cleared for dances, or else in numbered rows for dramatic performances.

One of the first things Mrs. Carson did was to organize a series of dancing classes. The children came on Saturday afternoons. Mrs. Carson presided at the piano. She directed the younger women who were teaching the various dancing classes. I can remember distinctly when I graduated from the polka to the waltz.

Right after Christmas of that year, Mrs. Carson decided to put on the light musical opera, "H.M.S. Pinafore," and discovered in the town some very good voices. The company practiced in the evenings. I used to go with my father to the rehearsals because I, too, had a small part in the production. I was the midshipman who called the admiral down. The "opery" was a very great success. It was repeated several times by request. Incidentally, the company had such a good time rehearsing that they would leave the opera house singing at the tops of their voices some of the popular airs they had just been practicing.

Then there were the amateur theatricals. Our popular clerk of the court, Jerrold Letcher, took the part of a colored servant. When the curtain went up on the first act, he was busy starting a fire in the grate. His hands and face were blackened and he wore a pair of white jeans. As he leaned over to light the fire, the white pants, tight over his black ones, split. Some one in the audience brought down the house by exclaiming, "By Jove, he's black all over."

### The "District School"

Of course no season was complete without a performance of the "District School." It always amused the young folks in the

my father. It was about a burro. This was so popular that at the time it was published in some eastern newspapers. I wish I had a copy to append to my memoirs. All that I remember is that although the burro could eat almost anything including tin cans, he met his end after attempting to digest a bride's first cake.

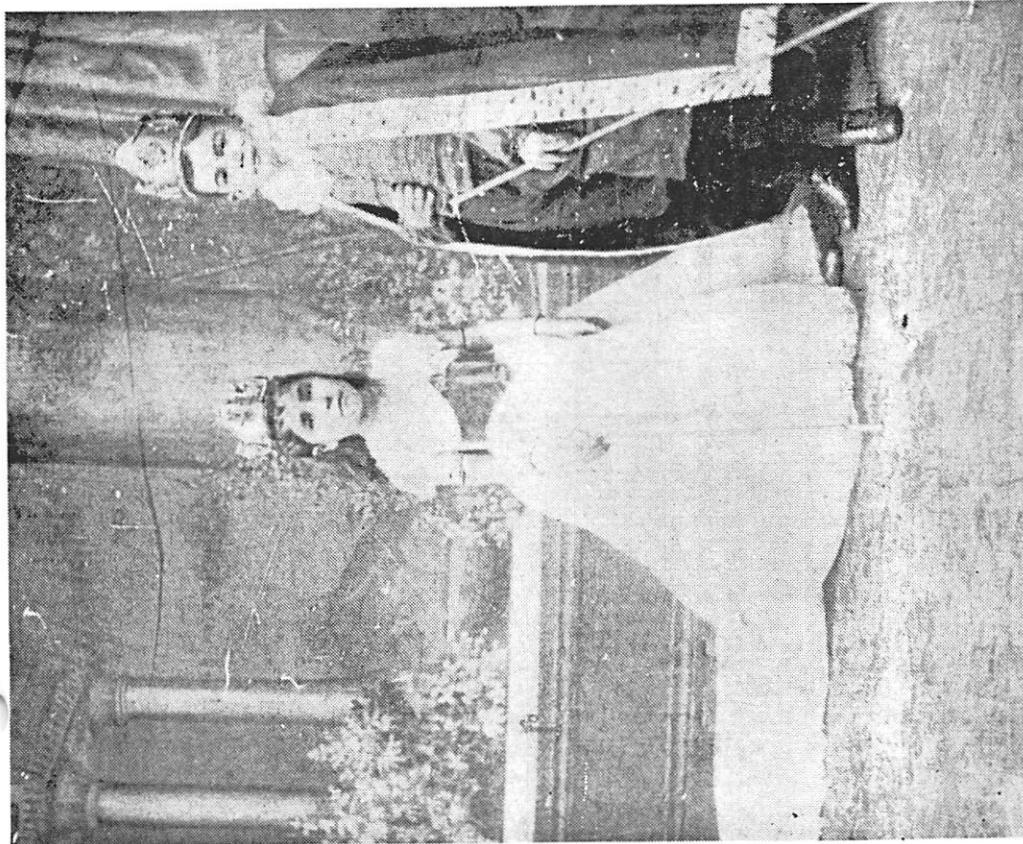
The children, under Mrs. Carson's direction, put on a light musical skit, called the "Dance of the Fairies." I won the coveted role of the queen of the fairies. This was not because I was the most beautiful child, but because my mother was a clever seamstress and could be counted upon to properly clothe the queen. On the night of the performance the fairy queen was loaded down with all the shining jewelry in the town. As soon as the performance was over each piece was reclaimed by its owner.

These entertainments afforded amusement to the town. The actors had as much fun preparing for them as the audience had in attending the performances. Several dancing clubs were formed which met once or twice a month. All in all, the "opery" house was rarely not in use.

### The Urge to Paint

One season, all of Ouray's young housewives were seized with the desire to paint and to beautify their homes. For instance, a small coal shovel or dust pan would be gilded, a bunch of flowers painted on its cup, the handle tied with a big bow of ribbon, and the whole hung up on the wall for our comment! Many white calla lilies were painted upon black velvet, and art classes were attended with great enthusiasm under the direction of any "would-be" artist who had lately come to town.

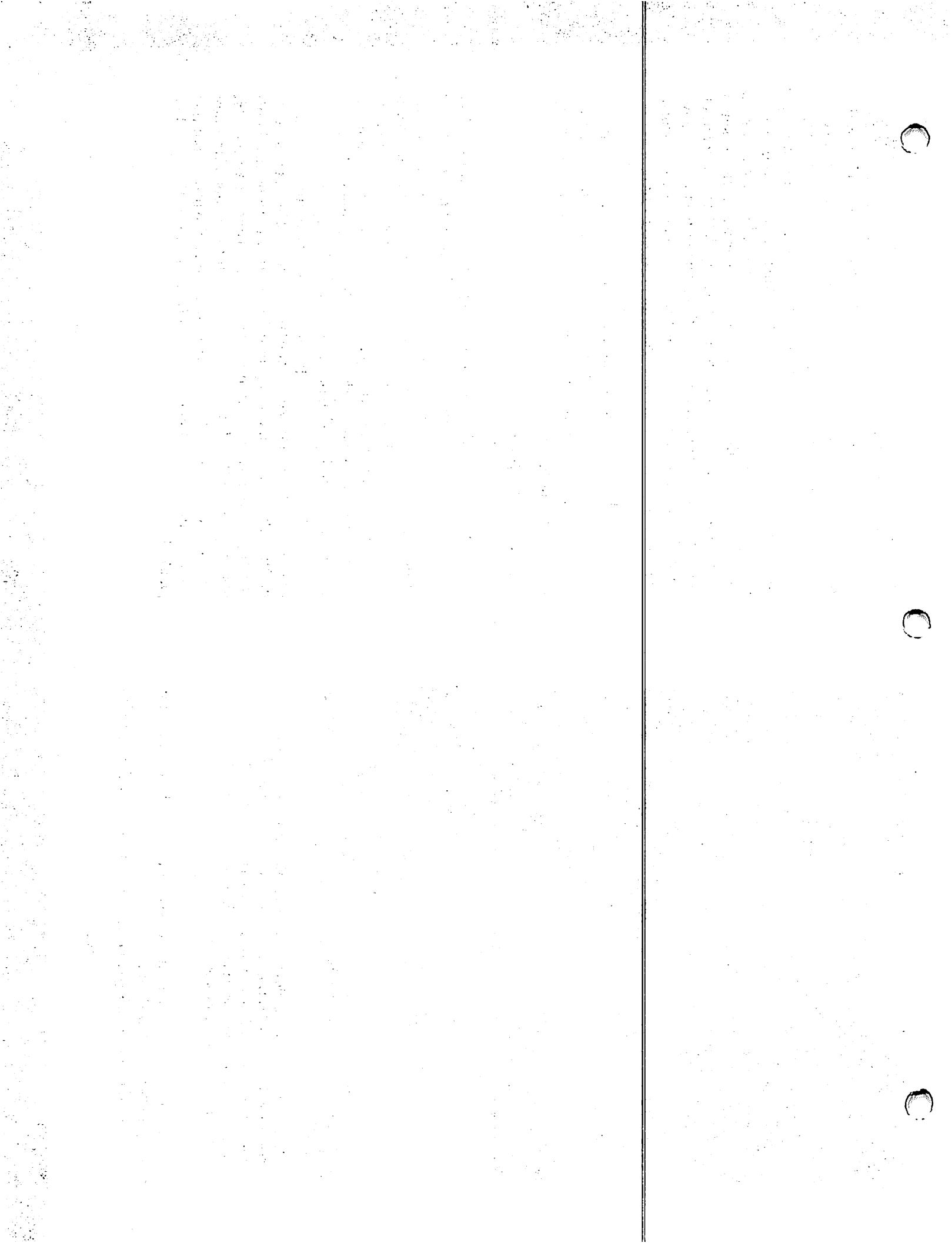
Of course, I just had to paint! So father bought me a cheap set of oil paints and some cheap brushes. He suggested to mother that she make a big pinata that was to be used only when painting, then hung up until the next time I painted. He also suggested that I paint on the nice white panels of the new back fence he had just erected around the back yard. I painted happily all summer long out in the fresh air until the spell had passed!



Leigh won the coveted role of the queen in the light musical skit, "Dance of the Fairies," only because, she claims, her mother was a clever seamstress and could be counted upon to properly clothe the queen. The part of king was played by Lee Gregory. (Moore, Ouray, Colorado) (Block-Turner collection)

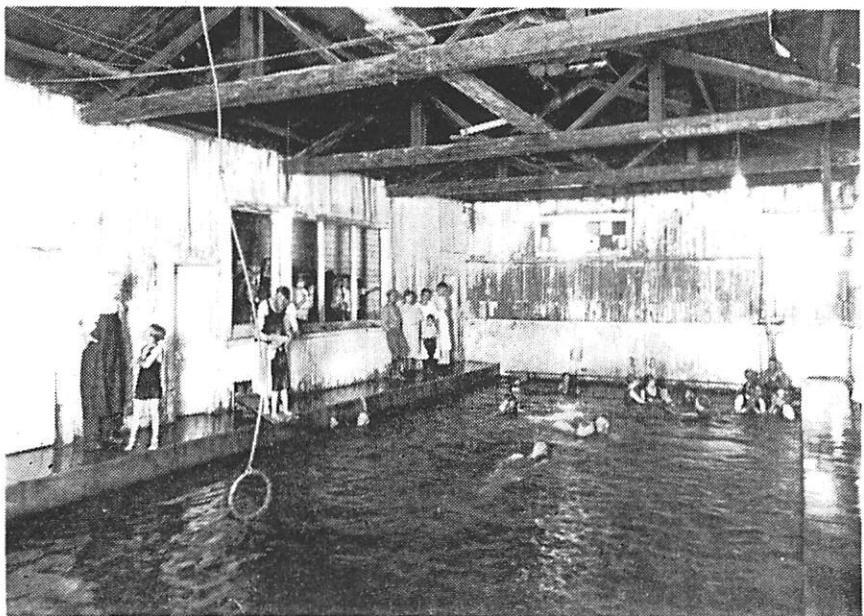
The hit of one year's performance was an essay delivered by audience to see their parents dressed in "kiddish" clothes and talking in "kiddish" fashion.

The hit of one year's performance was an essay delivered by



## The Town Plunge

Another recreation that the town enjoyed was swimming in the "plunge." A number of citizens got together and built a good sized swimming pool. It was roofed over, had dressing rooms, and was near the center of town. Water was pumped from the hot springs along the river<sup>8</sup> to the pool. On Saturday, the flow was stopped and the sides of the pool scrubbed. Then,



An inside view of the town plunge taken during the early 1890's.  
(Ouray County Historical Society)

when it was half filled, the plunge was turned over to the children for an hour or so. What a good time we had learning to swim and dive, splashing about like a bunch of water babies!

8-The hot springs were actually at the east end of 5th Avenue adjacent to Vinegar Hill and were piped and perhaps pumped down to the Plunge. A drain from the pool then continued down 5th Avenue to the river.

The telephone had been invented and was being perfected. I can remember the first instrument, a bulky wall model. You cranked a bell to call central. It had been installed in the drugstore. It was a great curiosity.

With the great amount of water power available from the mountain streams, it was inevitable that Ouray should have one of the first power plants in Colorado. Electric lights were installed. The first bulbs were carbon lights, not high powered and very hard on the eyes. Most of the women declared that they wanted nothing to do with the new lighting system. They preferred their good old Rochester lamps in spite of the daily task of filling them with coal oil and washing the chimneys.

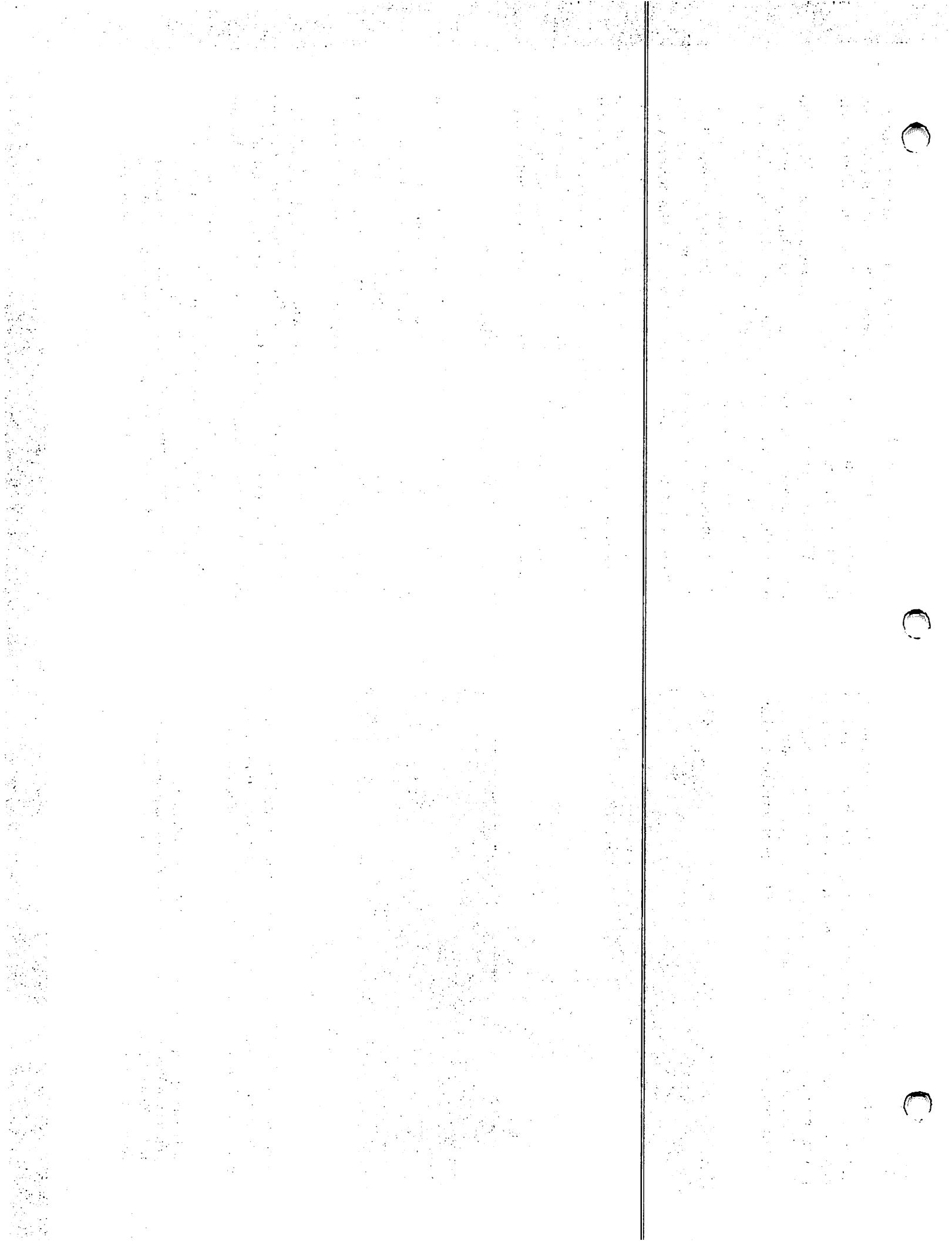
I also remember being taken by my father to an office in the courthouse where a man had set up the first model of a phonograph that any of us had ever seen. This crude model was built something like a lathe. The sound grooves were cut on cylinders. We used earphones through which we could hear some semblance of music or talking, if we used plenty of imagination. It was not until after I left Ouray that I saw my first automobile.

## Jeanne Disappears at Baptism Time

The only people who had their own church were the Roman Catholics. They had built a little log chapel about the time the first log cabins were built in Ouray.<sup>9</sup> There was, however, a community church in what was originally a storeroom. Mrs. Carson was the organist. A service was held each week by a different denomination, depending on which travelling minister happened to arrive.

I was a bit over five years old when I was baptized. Mother and Aunt Jen had arranged with a Presbyterian minister who was coming through Ouray to stop over and baptize all of their children. Great preparations were made for this event. We all

9-Three denominations, the Episcopalians, the Roman Catholics and the Presbyterians, were sending "circuit riding" priests into Ouray by 1877. Although the first church building was Presbyterian, this was lost by foreclosure and the buyer at auction was the Roman Catholic Bishop of Denver. The oldest church building still in use is the Episcopalian St. John's whose corner stone was laid in 1879.



had new clothes from head to toe, and were much excited about it. I can remember that the preacher used a silver bowl which was mother's pride and joy to hold the baptismal water. We started for church in our fine array, but before we arrived, Jeanne had disappeared and in spite of diligent search, we could not find her. After the service was over, she reappeared and confessed that she was hiding in a dark corner under the bridge because she did not want to be baptized.

The Ouray people were a friendly lot and there was much doing in the social line. The ladies vied with each other in giving dinner parties. Several clubs were formed to play whist, the popular card game of that period. In one club to which my father and mother belonged, each member paid 25 cents a month dues and a strict account was kept of the points. The man and woman who totalled the highest number of points for the month each received a sterling silver spoon as a prize. I recall that half of our silver at that time was marked, "Whist," with a date.

The Fourth of July was celebrated in neat style. During the day, there were processions including, of course, our volunteer fire department and the newly organized town band. In the evening, the municipal display of fireworks was set off up in the amphitheater, very beautiful against the backdrop of high mountains. Ouray took a great interest in politics. During the presidential campaigns there were torch-light processions which delighted the young fry. In fact Ouray had little time to miss the moving pictures and other forms of amusement we have today.

I have forgotten to mention that one street of the town was across the river and higher up (Oak Street). Our lot was the last one before the river and among our friends who lived across the river up on the bluff was one gentleman who loved my mother's hot waffles. Whenever she was serving them she would hang a red rag on the clothes line on the back porch, and he would come running.

## Reliving the Circus

One year our proud "papas" took their little girls to the circus. The railroad still ended at Montrose which was at the foot

of the mountains. Nevertheless, the large circus, which was to show for one night at Montrose, was advertised by big lurid posters on every big wall or vacant storefront in Ouray. This aroused our ambition to "go-see," and it especially aroused the desires of our papas to take us. Having persuaded the mamas that we little girls should see the circus, the papas hired a double surrey to drive us down to Montrose to see the circus and to bring us back the next day.

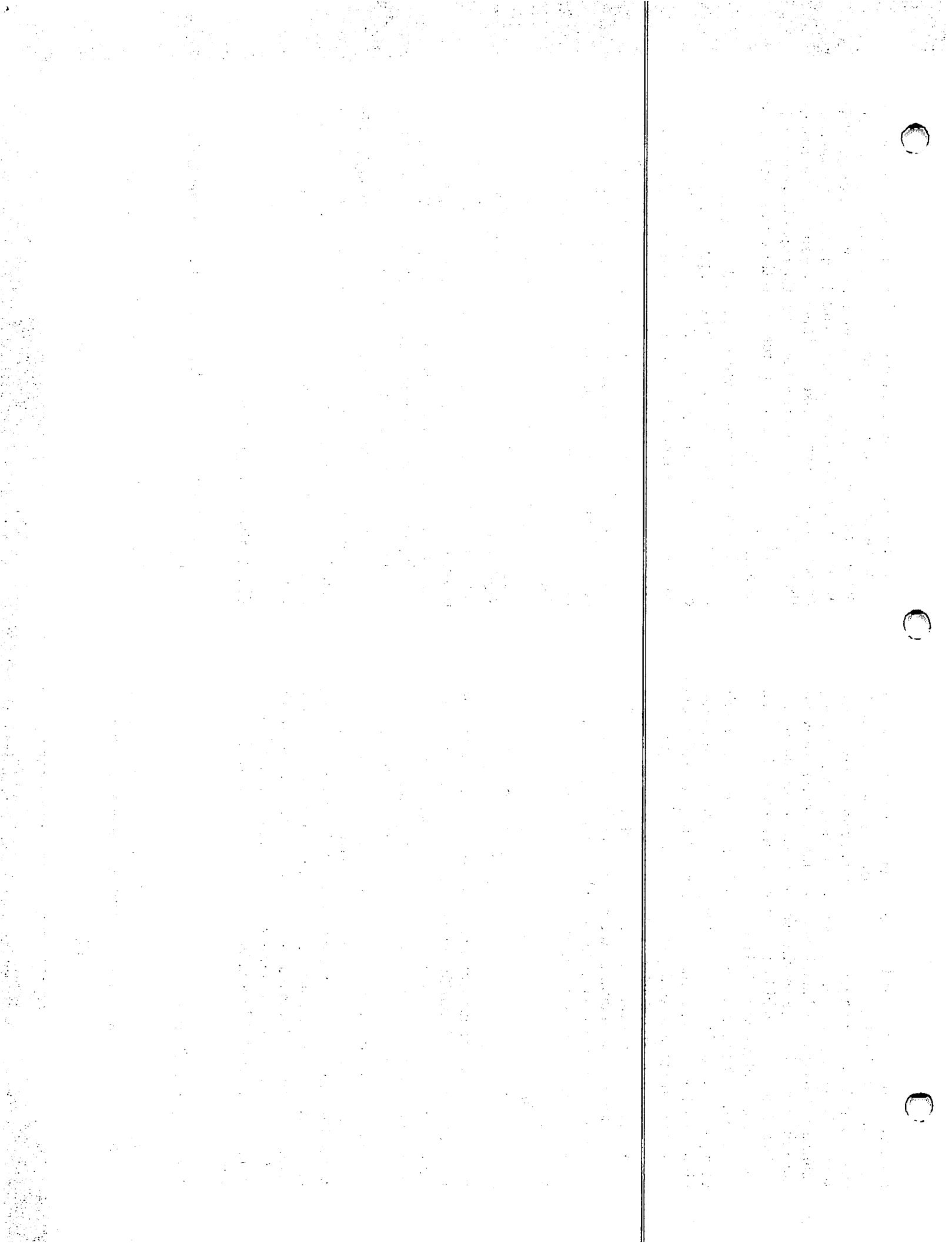
We started out very gayly in starched pinafores, and beautiful curls, arriving in Montrose a bit bedraggled by the long, hot dusty trip. We ate strange food at the hotel, were well plied with popcorn and pink lemonade at the circus, and thoroughly excited over the wild animals and the various acts of the circus. Little wonder there was little sleep and some sick tummies developed among the little girls in the strange hotel beds that night! It took our mothers at least a week to get us in shape and presentable again after we finally reached home the next day, tired and happy.

We relived the circus all the next winter for the benefit of those among our friends who had not been privileged to go. Jeanne tried to ride her burro standing up by slipping her feet beneath the surcingle that held the blanket on. She was promptly tossed off on her head for her pains! Our fathers bought us some small trapezes designed to fit tightly in doorjambs. We practiced hanging by our knees, "skinning the cat," etc. Jeanne and Willie became quite proficient, but Jess and I were either too timid or clumsy to enjoy it much. We did have costumes though! My father, a small man, had discarded some bright colored underwear that had shrunk to half size by too hot a wash. Using these as tights and bright neckties as sashes, we were very resplendent.

## The Chinese Laundry

Why not mention here that town institution, the Chinese laundry?

These kindly orientals did most of the washing of the town.



Our basket arrived at our house on Saturday afternoon, heavily laden with sweet smelling clothes. Each flounce and ruffle was pressed just so. And, there was always some little gift for the children of the house—coconut candy chips, Chinese nuts, papier-mâché mice, little puzzles, or small Chinese dolls. We were fascinated by their long queues, or braids, hanging down their backs, elongated by colored silk threads. They spoke little English so our conversation was in so-called pidgin English.

### Nene

There was that happy summer when my father's beautiful, younger sister, Nene, decided to visit us. She was young, had beautiful brown eyes and tawny gold hair, and was slender and graceful. Every male heart in town was laid at her feet!

Our house became the center of the town's social activities—parties, excursions, and horseback riding—until a fractious horse threw Nene off and sprained her ankle. After that the house was filled up with sympathizers, nurses, and friends. She finally rejected all of the very eligible males and went back to St. Louis to marry a talented and beloved cousin.



At the Santa Barbara beach in about 1890, left-to-right, Leigh Block, Jeanne Home, William "Tiny" Home, Jess Home, and Willie Block.  
(Block-Turner collection)

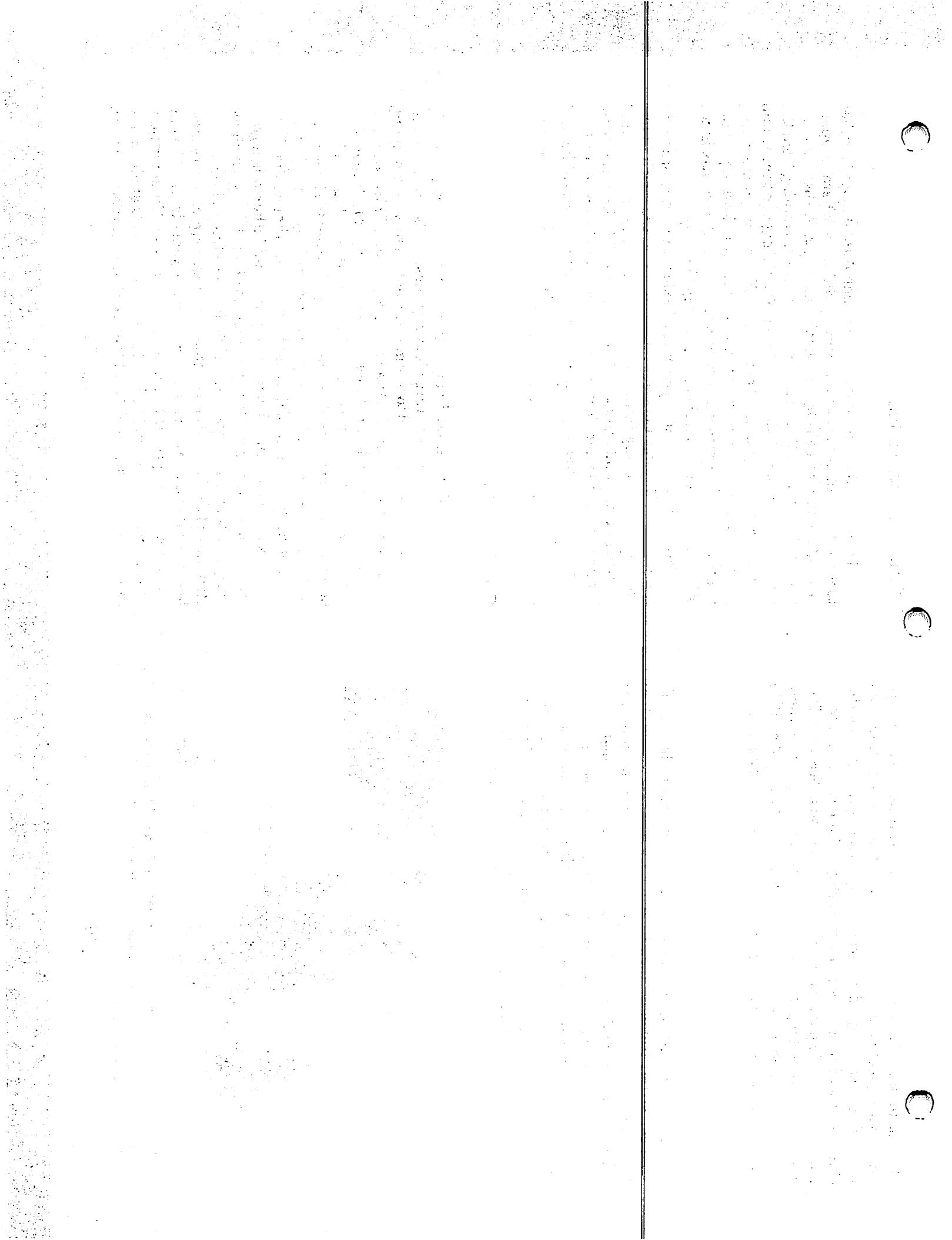
### Trip to Santa Barbara

I can remember another winter when Aunt Jen and mother took the brood of us to Santa Barbara, California, where we spent several leisurely weeks by the seashore. Santa Barbara was an old-fashioned town at that time with a mule car running from the town to the beach. This was an accommodating car that would wait for you to get your mail at the post office or buy your evening chops on the way home. A row of lime trees ran down a parking in the center of the street on which we lived and the smell of limes still brings to me memories of that happy holiday.

We visited the Santa Barbara Mission and many others in the vicinity. But most of the time we spent on the beach in our bathing suits digging in the sand, wading in the shallows, and growing brown and strong in the sunshine. William, the little brother of Jeanne and Jess, was old enough to be one of us that year. Jess and I had persuaded our mothers to dress us alike that winter so we could pretend we were twins. But Jeanne was always quick to disillusion our new friends.

### One Room School

When I first entered our district school in Ouray, one big room housed the two or three lower grades. This arrangement suited me because I liked to pay more attention to what was being taught to the upper grades than to the beginners. I already knew my letters and could read most simple words. My father subscribed to the *Rocky Mountain News*. With the big headlines spread out on the floor before me, I had picked out first one letter and then another until I recognized them as I lay on the big rug in the grateful warmth of the base burner stove that winter. I can never remember a time I could not count, and father was a good mathematician and made a game for us of our tables which we early mastered. In school, the bright colored charts of the simple structure of the body—the skeleton, the muscles, etc.—were most fascinating to me. We left Ouray just a few years later. The one room school had grown to three or four rooms. My education, though, was most sketchy. I had just drawn from that about me, from what interested me! I could read or figure beyond my years,



but I had acquired very little geography, spelling or grammar.

Down the street from our house lived an old Justice of the Peace. He held court in the front room of his cabin and lived in the back room. He spent much of his time in a big armchair on his front porch where we children used to visit him. He told us interesting stories by the hour. I now recognize these stories as Old World folktales. He also made us think about words! For instance, when we mentioned that a flower was "awfully" pretty, he would ask us how it could be "awful" and at the same time "pretty." I never did figure out what he meant, but I still thought he was awfully nice!

## The French Doll

One year he went back to Europe. When he returned he brought me an exquisite French doll. She was such a treasure at our house that I really was not allowed to play with her! She was kept to show off to visitors, who exclaimed over her handmade, lace-trimmed clothes and her real hair set into the wax of her head, her beautiful features, etc. My small brother fixed them one day. He managed to get hold of her when someone had left her lying on the table. He took her over to the base burner to warm her up. "Dollie was so cold." The beautiful features ran into a pink mess!

Without realizing it, the same sort of a change was coming over our town. A big depression was creeping up. The price of silver had suddenly collapsed. First one and then others of our friends or neighbors were selling out and moving elsewhere to seek their fortunes. My uncle and his family left before we did, and my beloved Jess and I were separated for the first time. Not long after, Mr. Hartwell closed his big warehouse. My father, too, decided to seek his fortune elsewhere and to make a new start in Salt Lake City.

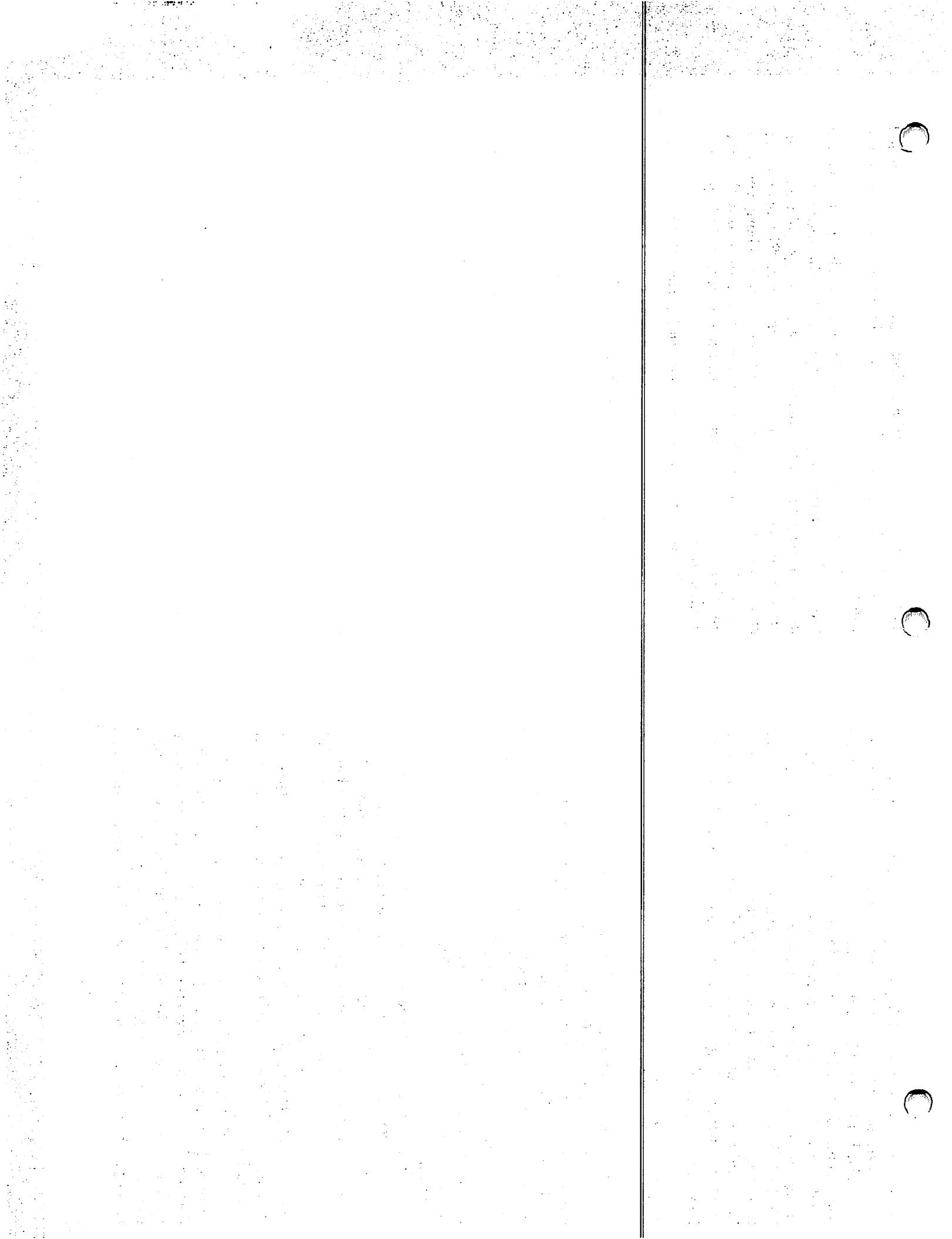
When father sold the house, I was very busy going about town seeking new homes for my numerous pets and dolls. I had decided that I had outgrown the doll age, especially as Jess was no longer there to play with me. I looked forward with great excitement to living and going to school in what seemed to me a big city. The day came when we were to leave. Our friends had

gathered at the station (the railroad by this time had reached Ouray<sup>10</sup>). I had provided myself with books for company on the train.

At the last moment, a friend of mother's, who coveted a table that mother was leaving behind, appeared at the station with an immense package in her arms. It was a large, jointed, overdressed, becurled doll almost as big as I was. She insisted on giving it to me in exchange for mother's table. There was little room for the doll on the train. Ever afterward she was in the way, unloved, and unplayed with until I succeeded in finding a new mother for her.

10-The first train departed from Ouray on December 15, 1888.

oooOooo



as 18 (lied about his age). It was also stated that he was 4 ft. 9 in. tall, was made company marker, and listed his civilian status as student, earning \$3.99 a month as a private. There is no indication that he ever left Wisconsin. The last notation on his record is that he served without absences, that he was owed his last month stipend and that he had lost his canteen 'unavoidably.' "So there you have your brave Civil War ancestor—4 ft 9 in. tall (in a 12/1/09 request for a pension, he was to describe himself as 5 ft 2 in. tall), trying to pass as 18 when he was only 16—and his major claim to fame—he lost his canteen.

"Family legend also had it that he contracted typhoid fever during the war and was mustered out because of his health. There is no indication of this on his military record—and in fact he originally signed up for only 100 days. However, the death certificate, which was also included (grandmother filed it when she applied for the pension), stated that he died of mitral insufficiency. Mitral insufficiency is most commonly caused by rheumatic fever but it can be an aftermath of typhoid. The legend may therefore be true."

The Archive files reveal that our grandparents, having married on November 17, 1877, took up residence in Ouray, Colorado in June 1878. In other words, the wagon trip across Colorado was part of their honeymoon. In Ouray, while his brother-in-law, William Home, did open a general store with financial assistance from D. C. Hartwell, William Block's salable talent appeared to be that of a business man. On the Mississippi riverboat he had been purser. An early newspaper reported that the "Board of County Commissioners on November 17, 1883 reviewed and approved an accounting from W. E. Block for road building from the Uncompahgre River to the north end of Red Mountain Park."<sup>11</sup> Mining deeds in the Block/Turner archives reveal that F. L. Butterfield and W. E. Block paid \$8,000 for the "Astor Lode" in the Uncompahgre Mining District on April 2, 1889 and then turned around on December 11th and sold it for \$25,000. But, mining transactions frequently contain a certain

11-W. E. Block supervised the construction of six-to seven miles of road for Ouray County which provided the financing. (From research of Marvin Gregory)

## ADDENDUM A More About the Two Families

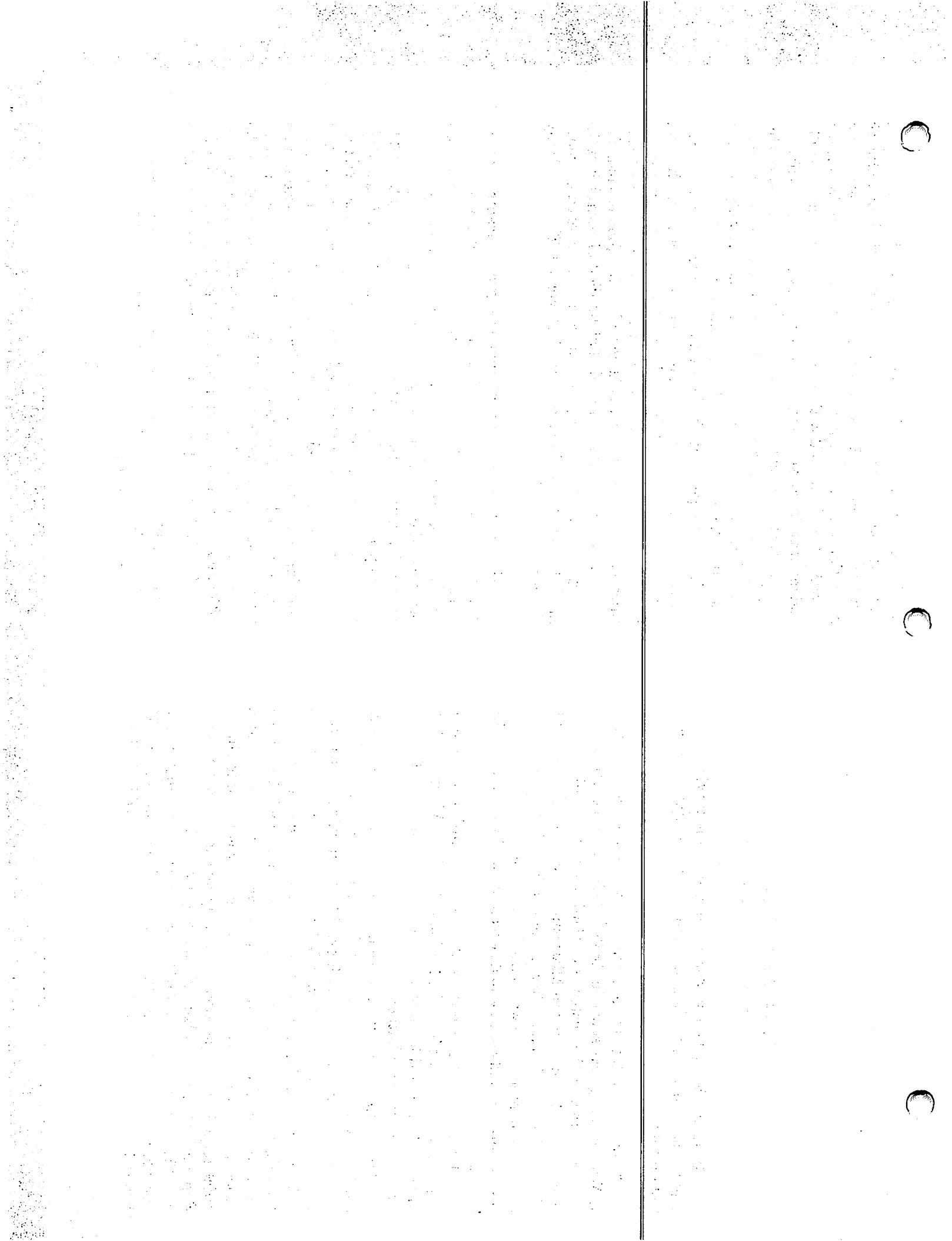
My sister, Mary Lou, undertook to unravel a puzzle in the original edition of the Memoirs about the birthplace of our grandfather:

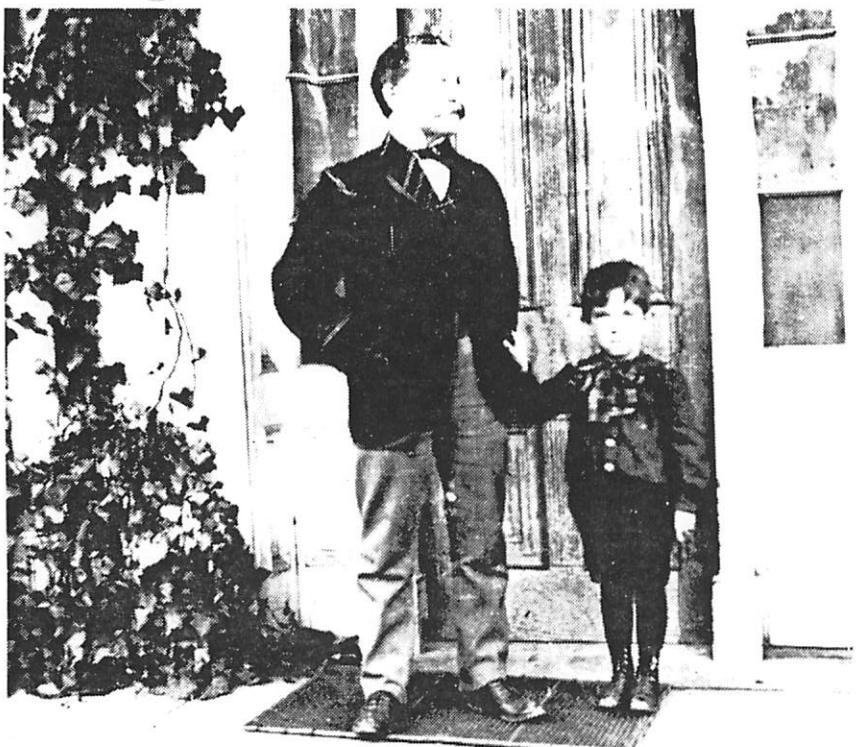
"Mother had stated that her father, William Block, was born in Warrensburg, Missouri in 1848. This bothered me since Warrensburg is on the western side of Missouri and family legend always placed him near the Mississippi. Accordingly, in 1973 when I visited Salt Lake City, I went to Mt. Olivet Cemetery where I remembered he was buried among the Civil War veterans. There I found that he had served in Co E 41st Wisconsin Infantry.

"I moved rather slowly and it wasn't until 1976 that I requested his records from the National Archives. A large packet came back. From this material a new picture, at least for me, emerges of our grandfather.

"In his application for a pension he lists his birth date as July 23, 1847 (the day before Brigham Young established Salt Lake City) and his birthplace as Ashley, Pike County, Missouri (the very county from which "Sweet Betsy from Pike" came, for you folk song buffs). This now makes sense since Ashley is near the Mississippi. He enlisted in the Union Army on May 5, 1864 from Lancaster, Wisconsin, stating that he lived at the time in Potosi, Wisconsin and was a clerk. This information was contained in his 1909 request for a pension. He remained in the army until September 23, 1864, when he was mustered out.

"They also sent copies of his army records. A quick check reveals to all that he was 16 when he enlisted and turned 17 before he was mustered out. On his company record he is listed





William E. Block at Salt Lake City in the early 1900's with his youngest son, James A. Block. (Block-Turner collection)

element of witchcraft, so one does not know what was really going on behind the scenes. But, it is clear that W. E. Block did manage a warehouse for D. C. Hartwell, and this job continued until 1892 when Hartwell sold the warehouse, among other assets, in an attempt to stave off bankruptcy which finally caught up with him during the crash of 1893.

In December 1892 W. E. Block and his family reached Salt Lake City where he gained employment with the Newhouse Mines and Smelters/Boston Consolidated Mining Company. On his business card he described himself as an accountant, but in his 1909 pension request, as a bookkeeper. Ever hopeful of that one bonanza, he left an impressive clutch of mining stocks: The Royal Metals Mining and Leasing Company, the Texas Mining Company, the Hannapah Mining and Smelting Company, the

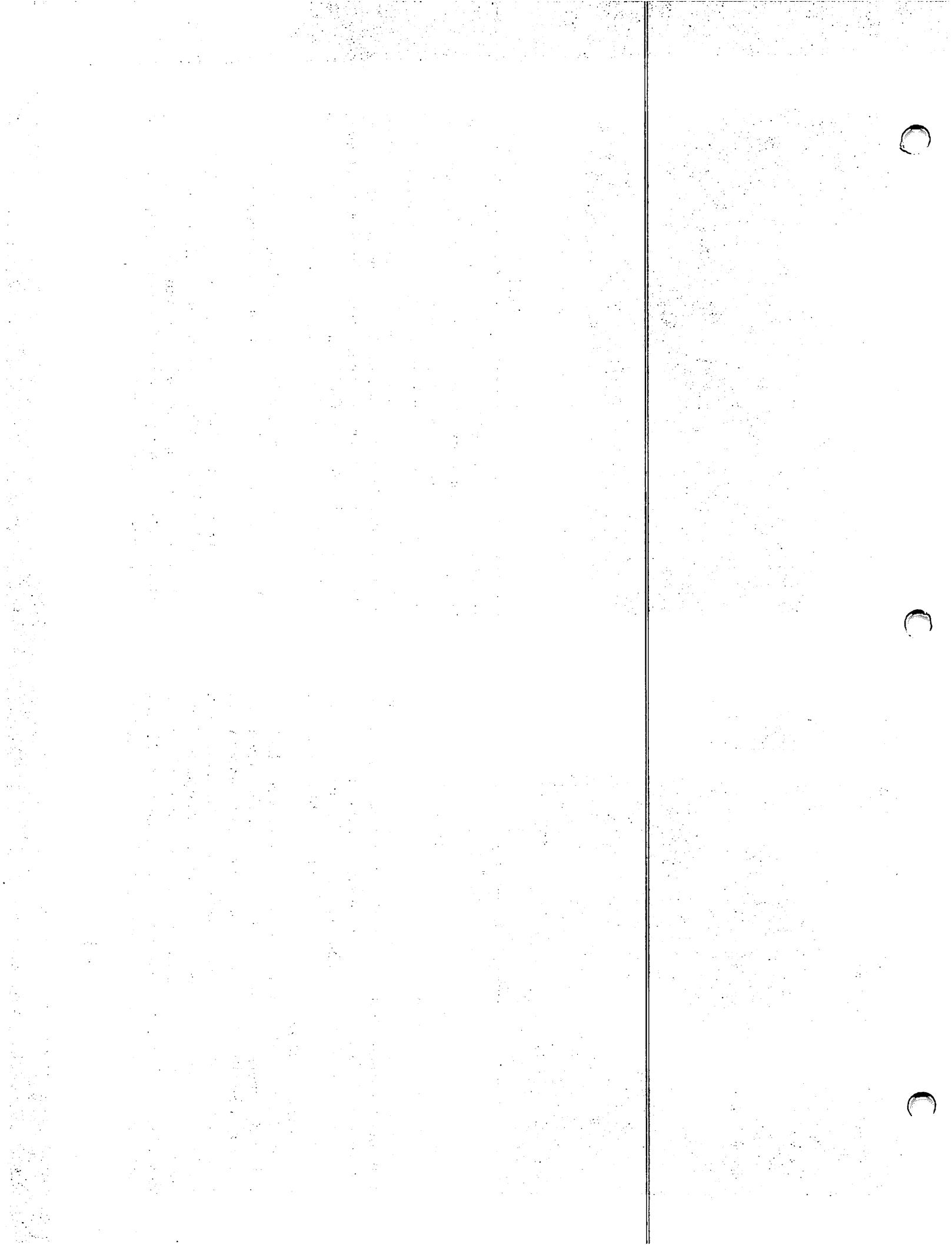


Leigh Block at Salt Lake City in the early 1900's. (Block-Turner collection)

Rexford Mining Company, the Goldfield Daly West Mining Company, the Goldfield Black Cat Mining Company, the Black Diamond Mining and Milling Company, the Silver City Consolidated Mining Company, the Samoa Mining & Milling Company, etc., all on impressively engraved bond paper. Another son, James A. Block, was born on February 14, 1895 in Salt Lake City. The family was to live in a succession of homes until they moved to 1026 First Avenue, adjacent to the Wasatch Elementary School. However, this home is not where William E. Block died, but rather in Los Angeles, California, on June 1, 1911, at the age of 63. What took him to California the record does not show.

A letter I received following my mother's death from Mrs. C. P. Pollack, the "Aunt Nene" of the memoirs, is revealing:

".....I spent some of the happiest days of my life at the home of my brother, Will, and his good, unselfish wife, Flora ... in old Ouray. It was during this visit that your dear mother and I became so attached to one another. She was about five years old then, a most attractive and talented little girl as I ever met.



Whenever she wanted to explain anything, she would take out her pencil and paper and draw it, and it always was perfect. When she came to St. Louis with her father for a visit, I asked her how she got there. With paper and pencil, she drew the most perfect engine and coaches, even the smoke was not left out. She had the soul of an artist and the warm heart of a lovely child and a very wonderful woman...."

My mother entered the schools of the "big city," probably first at the Wasatch Elementary School, and then at the Salt Lake High School which was established in 1889 and subsequently became West High School. Among her close friends at school was Florence E. Allen, whose father, while in the territorial legislature, wrote the first laws for public education in Utah, and later became Utah's first Congressman. She demonstrated a talent for art that gained her admission to the Corcoran School of Art in Washington D. C. However, this training was terminated prematurely when her father became ill and she returned to Salt Lake City to help support the family. She entered the civil engineering office of C. P. Brooks where she became adept at reducing surveyor's notes and preparing the mining maps that were so important to the mineral industry of Utah in that day.

As previously noted she married my father whom she had met at the Park City offices of the Silver King Coalition Mines.



At about 1905 in Salt Lake City, Flora Latshaw Block on the right, and Mary Louise Kaltenbach Block, her husband's stepmother. Mary Louise is the young ward in the St. Louis convent who eloped with William Block's widowed father! (Block-Turner collection)

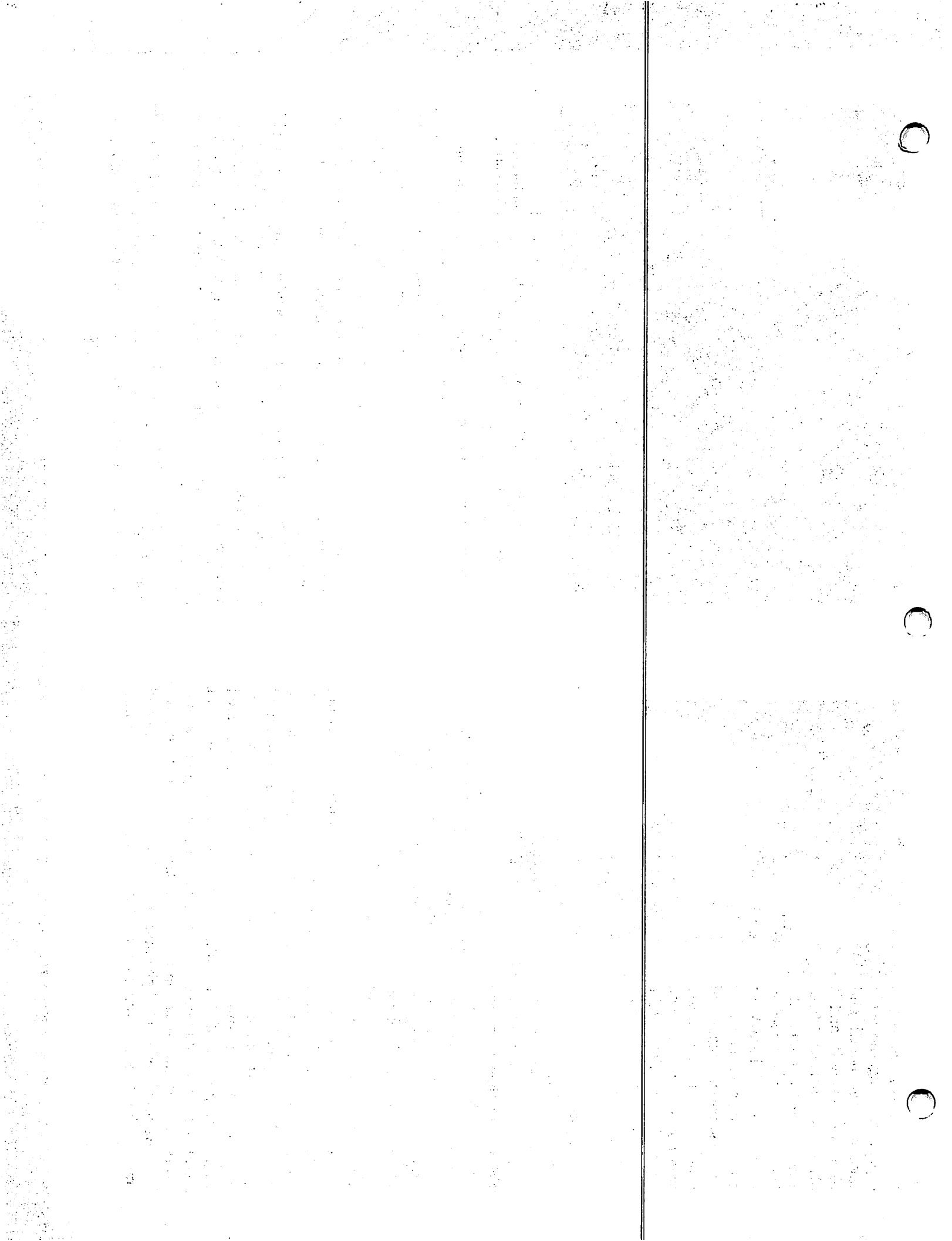


Staff of the C. B. Brook's office during the early 1910's. From left to right, Percy Browne, George Winwood, C. P. Brooks, Leigh Block, O. R. Turner, Marie Crane, and Arlene Tibbets. When Brooks retired, Leigh Block took over the firm. (Block-Turner collection)

Their wedding occurred on Christmas Day, 1917, in the home of her mother. Upon Mr. Brook's retirement, mother took over his civil engineering practice, with my father taking occasional surveying assignments such as the mammoth task of installing and surveying a triangulation system for the Silver King Coalition Mines that placed accurately located flags on many peaks throughout the district of the mine's claims so that new claims could be rapidly surveyed by triangulation from two or three of the flags.

My mother took on occasional special assignments. Probably her largest commission was in 1928 when she undertook the design of a monument to be constructed on a hillock near Heber, Utah, commemorating Wasatch County's War Veterans. More details on "Memorial Hill" are given in Appendix C and on the back cover of this book.

My father also had other interests: establishing a radio manufacturing business, attempting to develop a radio ore finding machine, and finally resurrecting a gold mine called the



"Arabian" near Kingman, Arizona. But by this time it was 1929, and the plunging gold prices that followed the stock market crash wiped him out and he disappeared for a number of years, leaving my mother as sole breadwinner for our family. At this point my mother closed the civil engineering office and became an employee of its principal customer, the Silver King Coalition Mines.

In 1927 my parents had contracted to purchase the Allen House at 929 First Avenue on Salt Lake City's northern bench. This house had been the locale of many happy occasions for her through her friendship with the Allens and their children. This house was to become the location of many happy occasions for my sister and me. After 1929 she could no longer meet the financial stipulations of the original purchase contract, and the matter remained in limbo until 1932 when Mr. Allen visited Salt Lake and negotiated a new contract with terms that my mother could meet. There is much to write about the Allen house, but that will require another book!

Suffice it to say that my mother provided for my sister and me the same happy childhood she had experienced, extending it also to many "adopted" young people. One young man came one fall day to wash windows and stayed three years (without finishing the windows). He was to marry his wife-to-be in our living room.

My mother's interest in art became an avocation, and her portraits in oil were widely exhibited in Utah. She helped to organize and for a number of years was the business manager of the fine arts school at the Art Barn, adjacent to the campus of the University of Utah. The Art Barn staff mounted exhibits of local artists and supported art classes, a role it continues today in its thirty-seventh year.

My mother took on many small commissions, largely to hand letter the parchment resolutions that companies in those days awarded their retiring executives. She also prepared illustrations for books published by the Mormon Church. Through all this, though, she continued to calculate traverses from surveyor's notes and create mining maps until her retirement in 1947, when she came to Maryland.

In the three years she had left, she was "grandmother" to the new neighborhood of "Chillum Manor," renewed many old Wash-

ington D. C. friendships, visited the many galleries whose pictures she had known only as reproductions, helped settle Mary Lou in a Philadelphia rooming house near the University of Pennsylvania where she continued her medical studies, visited the galleries and museums of New York City in the company of other old friends, and made a new home for her son who was involved in electronic development and research for the Naval Ordnance Laboratory at its new campus only a few miles away.

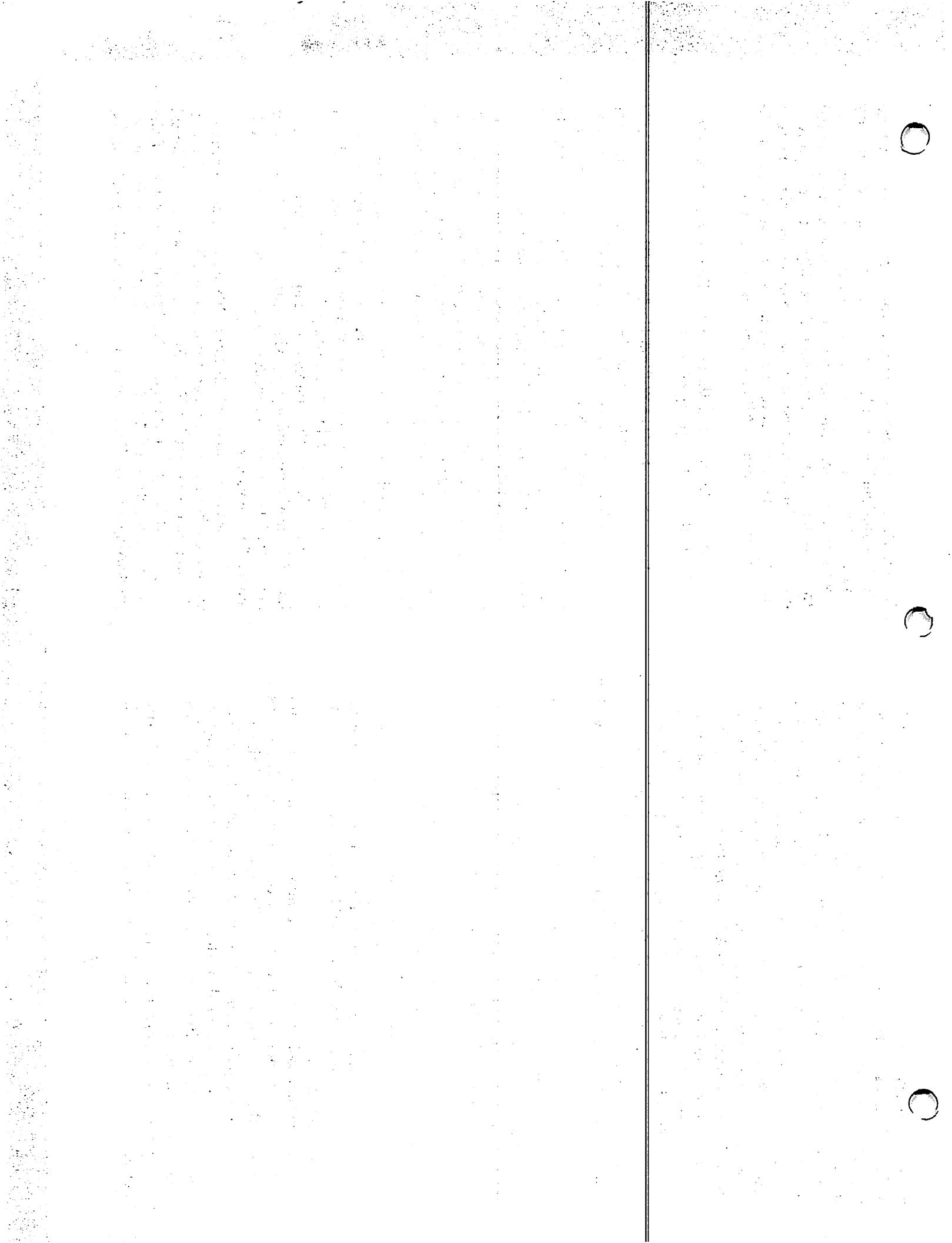
What of the others in these two families who came to settle in Ouray during the spring of 1878?

Her younger brother William Hartwell Block (named after D. C. Hartwell) was wholly educated in Salt Lake City. His first regular work during the early 1900's was in Goldfield, Nevada as a partner in a stock brokerage. Next, in 1908 he became foreman of the Tonapah Mining Company mills at Millers, Nevada. In 1915 he became Chief Master Mechanic at the Tonapah Belmont Development Company in Tonapah and remained there until 1921 when he moved to Mill Valley, California where he bought the G. M. Auto Agency which he successfully operated until 1925 when he sold out and moved to Los Angeles. During 1932 he was seriously injured in an automobile accident from which he never fully recovered, although he was able to work and take care of himself.

He married Bessie Pike in 1907 and they raised a family of four, three girls and one boy. For many years his son John was chief recording engineer for Capitol Records. During World War II, John served as a pilot in the Army Air Corps.

William Home, the storekeeper, moved his family to Salt Lake City as the impending recession began to affect his business in Ouray. His three children, Jess, Jeanne, and Bill, each made names for themselves.

Jess was educated in Salt Lake City and became a kindergarten teacher there. Through one of her pupils, Mary Elizabeth Fairweather, she met Dr. E. C. Fairweather, a widowed dental surgeon, whom she married in 1916. They moved east. Dr. Fairweather's practice became centered in New York City with offices overlooking Central Park, but his home was in suburban Yonkers.



Sometime after her husband's death, Jess moved to Bronxville.

Jess was a poet at heart and soon found demand for her writings in greeting cards and children's books. Her greeting cards, in particular, had the distinction of being signed "Jess Home Fairweather." In a feature on interesting people, the *American Magazine* had this to say in February 1930:

"Probably most of the valentines she will get this year will have verses written by Mrs. Jess Fairweather of Bronxville, N. Y. She tosses off a thousand greetings a month, 200 of which are valentines. She also does commercial and magazine verse, just to keep her hand in. She has only one complaint. She seldom receives a friendly greeting card she hasn't written herself."

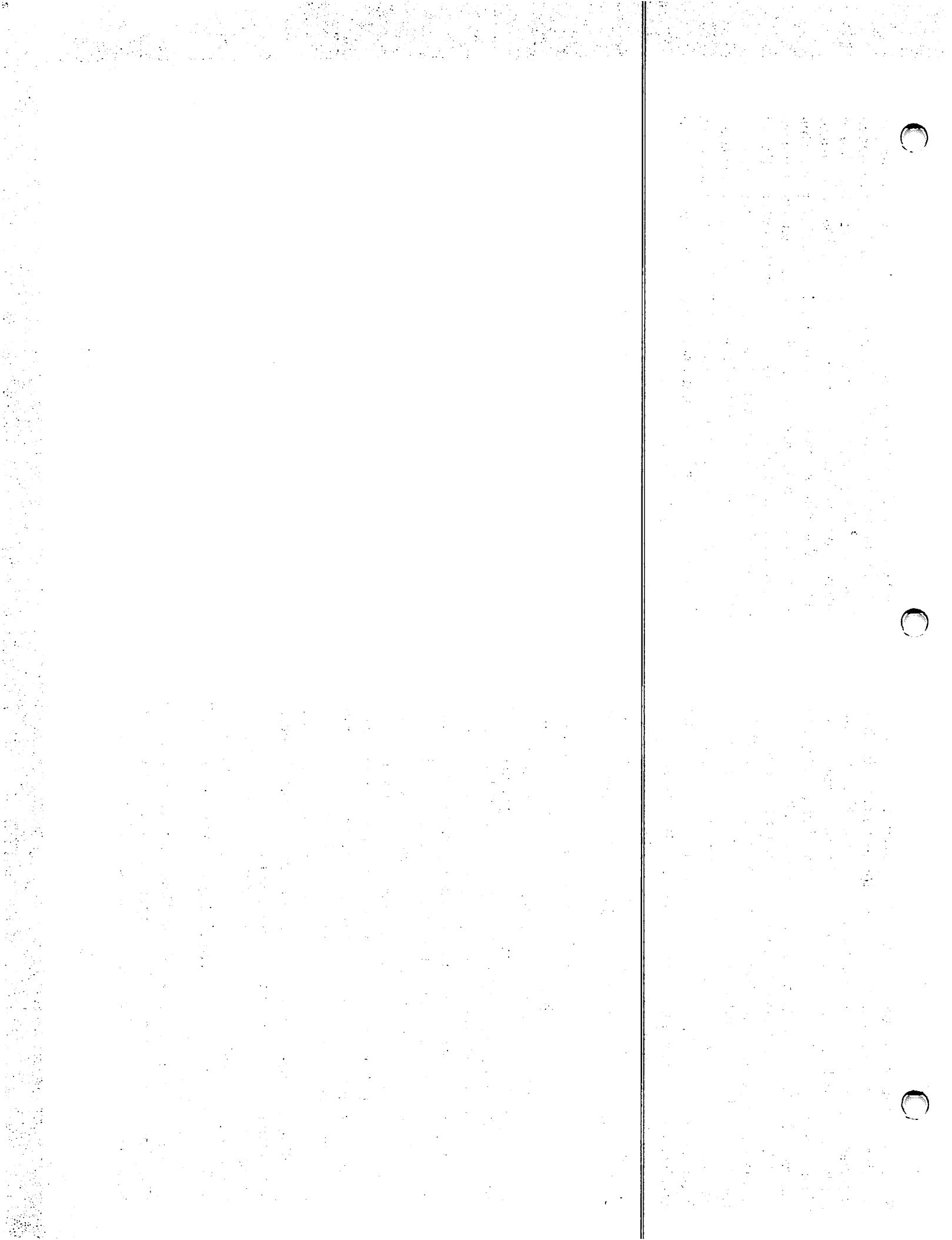
One son, William, was born to her. In time William Fairweather chose medicine as his career, becoming a surgeon specializing in cancer in the Cleveland/Akron area and is now retired.

Jeanne Home never married. She became associated with the University of Utah where she was assistant registrar. While Mary Lou and I were growing up, Jeanne was our educational guru, opening University doors for us, and planting each of us at different times in the elite William J. Stewart School, now disbanded, on the University campus. This school was attended primarily by faculty children and was the experimental training center for teachers. Jeanne continued to have fun in her life, and certainly was the maverick of the family, ready on a moment's notice to pull the rug out from under someone, and never taking the ordeals of life too seriously—such as absenting herself from the family baptism service. During the depression years, Jeanne was always the owner of an automobile, usually a year or two old at the most. She used her car for the common good of the family, providing transportation on many family trips around the area, and during the summer "break," taking her friends across country on sightseeing expeditions. After retirement she settled in San Jose, California, in a cottage next to that of her brother William who by now had been crippled by a stroke, but could still drive and get around.

This youngest member of the Home family, also called "Tiny" because he became a big strapping man of six feet or so, was an undergraduate football star and then football coach at the

University of Utah. Later he migrated to New Jersey where he married and gained a family of three boys, the oldest, nicknamed "Mac," and the younger two being twins, Jerry and Bill. Mac's interest in guns developed in his teens. He could disassemble and reassemble almost any gun, and detail a missing part. This interest was transformed into his admission to West Point, where he graduated as a pilot. During World War II he was stationed in Italy, where he died in a crash while testing new features of a fighter plane. To the best of my knowledge Bill and Jerry settled in the Northwest. In approximately 1955, their crippled father, William, was killed in an auto accident as he tried to cross a heavily travelled highway.

WRT



## ADDENDUM B

### Subsequent Family Visits to Ouray

My mother did not return to Ouray for 43 years. The railroad was gone, but auto travel was a versatile substitute. Little had changed. The home where she remembered growing up was much the same, but showed signs of thoughtful attention—its gardens green, the outside appearing to have been regularly painted. Some old family friends were still there in Ouray, who after a doubletake, remembered the little girls who had played different parts in the theatrical performances of the 1890's. Mary Lou was along on this 1936 trip, Jeanne Home driving, which first included visits with friends at Cedaredge, and after Ouray, a trip to Mesa Verde.

Mary Lou and her close friend, Beverly Hayes (Daley), took summer jobs at Mesa Verde in 1944. On the way down they stopped in Ouray and reported it to be the same lazy town Mary had seen in 1936. From Silverton to Durango, they rode the narrow-gage railroad, and in recent years, Beverly has recalled that ride as the most frightening experience of her life—looking out of a coach window and seeing nothing below except a riverbed miles below.

### 1954 Visit

My own first encounter came in 1954 when I stopped overnight, staying in the famous Beaumont Hotel and eating in its once palatial dining room. I too found one family on Oak Street who remembered the Block family. Equipped with a new color camera, I roamed the town. It was late July, but tourist travel was insignificant. I easily found the house where my mother had been born. It was now owned by Dr. E. L. Spangler, the town's only physician and surgeon who had become resident physician at the town's hospital<sup>12</sup> in 1949 when Dr. C. V. Bates retired. (He

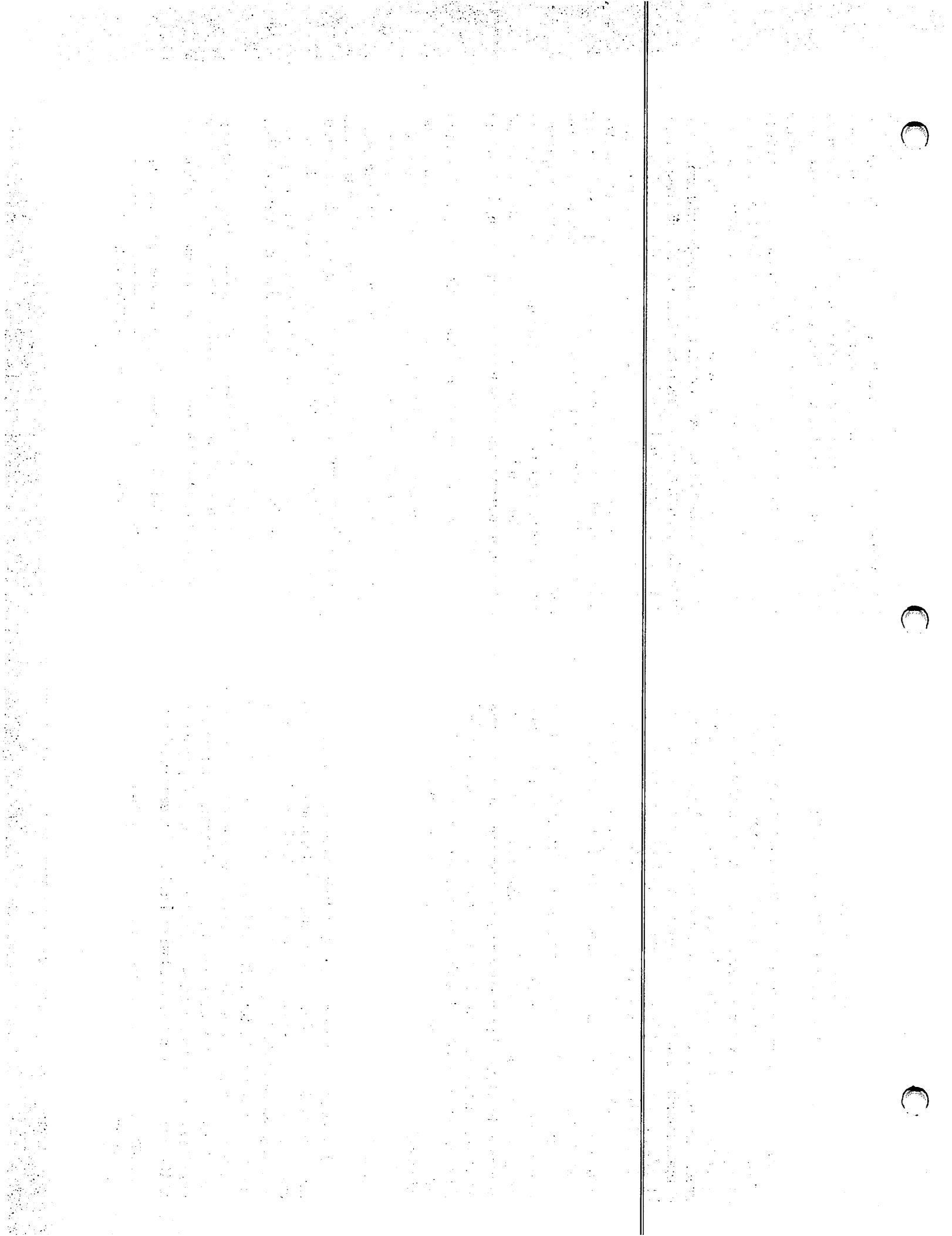
12-The hospital at this time was owned by the Idarado Mining Company.

continued this role until 1958 when stricter state standards made the hospital's continuation a financial impossibility. Today it houses the Ouray County museum.) My knock at the door brought Mrs. Spangler who told me a bit about the old house as they had found it, and the remodelling that has been necessary to make it liveable. The bay window was still in place. The walls were no longer covered with muslin and over that wall paper, which had waved in and out with the wind. New plumbing had been installed. The old wood stove in the kitchen had long since been replaced. Hot bathwater was no longer obtained from the tank on its side. I asked Mrs. Spangler if the huge boulder still protruded from the ground outside a bedroom window. No, she responded, her husband had asked that it be removed, and men had come to blast it into pieces. She thought a piece of the boulder still remained nearby in a grove of trees. A few steps away was the red-brick warehouse where my grandfather had supervised loading the burros for the trips up the mountains to the mines. The warehouse was now abandoned, but a few pieces of mining equipment were still scattered about. Jeeps had replaced those stout beasts that once had trundled up the narrow trails. Now, Jeeps carried occasional tourists instead of loads of timber, grub, and mining machinery.

In my search I soon located the boulder fragment, its top punctured like a salt cellar, the long drill holes revealed in cross-section by the blasting split. A group of small girls were busily preparing a tea party on its top flat section. But I was disappointed to see only ordinary play dishes such as you would get at a "dime" store. Apparently, the friendly assay office that had supplied the varicolored crucibles had long since disappeared. The Opera House was still there, but a big sign on its wall advertised it as a garage, and the pumps in front dispensed Texaco gasoline. One office, however, did have window fliers advertising Jeeps for lease.

Much refreshed by this quiet town, I gathered my belongings and departed south over the "Million Dollar Highway"<sup>13</sup> for Durango and points east, but not until after I had paid a brief call

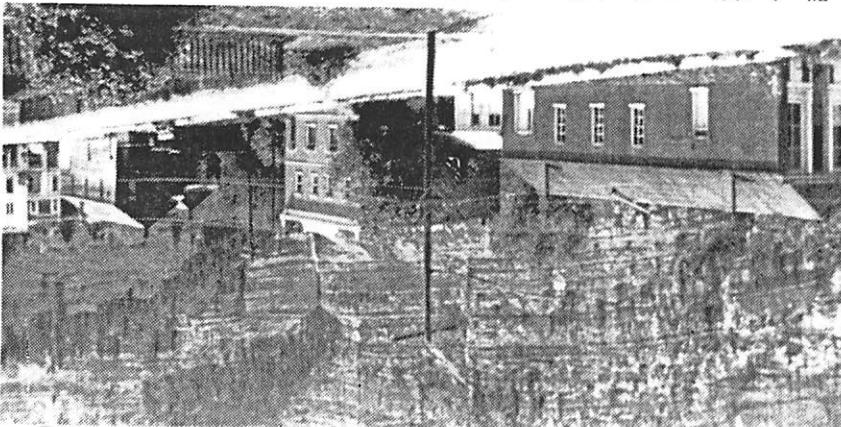
13-The naming of this segment of rugged highway is obscure. Our favorite: one Eastern women contemplating a trip by stage exclaimed, "I wouldn't take that ride for a Million Dollars!"



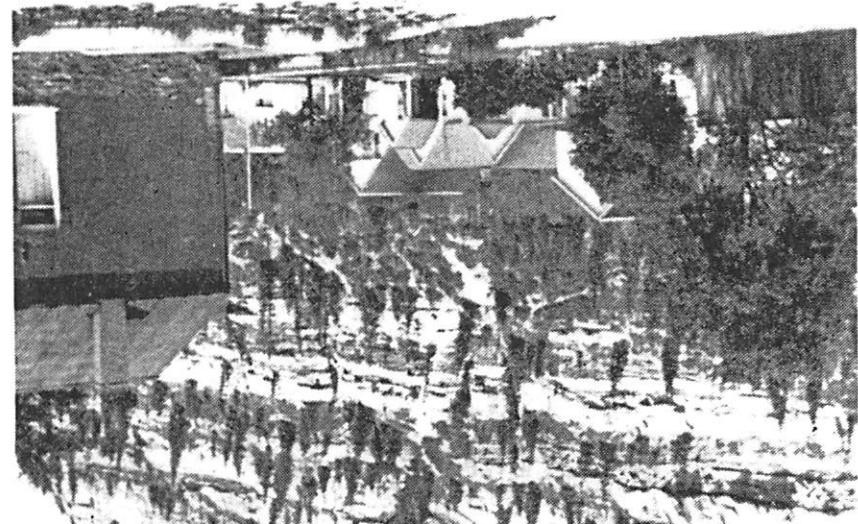
Five small girls party on top of the boulder fragment removed from the side yard of the old Black home. In 1880-90 the small boys (and an occasional girl) delighted in collecting the discarded miners' drills and using these to fill the big boulder with holes, some of which can be seen at the split cross section. (William R. Turner, 1954)



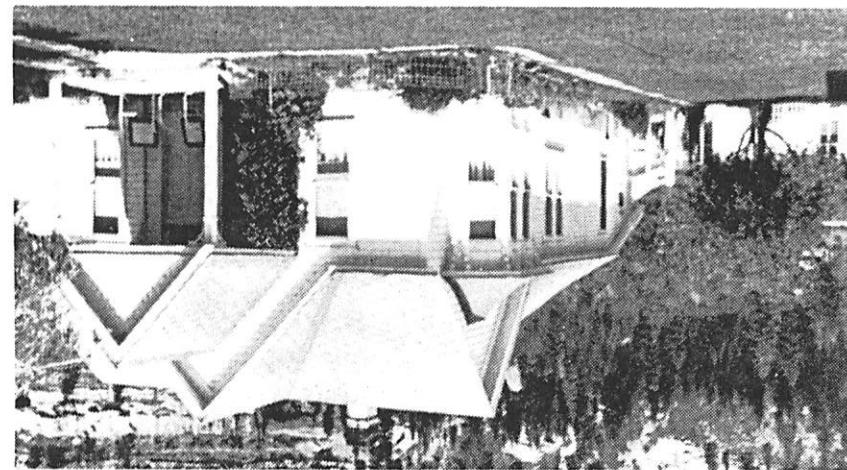
The building to the left was the Hartwell warehouse which Leigh Black's father managed. Built in 1883 of red brick, it remained the only brick building in Ouray until the Carnegie Brick Works opened and such buildings at the new school, the Beaumont Hotel, and the Opera House were started in the mid-1880's. (William R. Turner, 1954)



At this corner, the old bouldered run made a sharp turn to the right and continued two more blocks. Sometimes the slides didn't make the turn, and the Black home, lower center behind the closest in that day, took in the victims. (William R. Turner, 1954)



The Block home in Ouray as seen in 1954 with its bay window and floor levels that tended to follow the land slope. One block down and the river where the children were supposed to drown the mice caught in their mother's trap, but turned them loose instead, the mice beating the children back to the house. (William R. Turner, 1954)



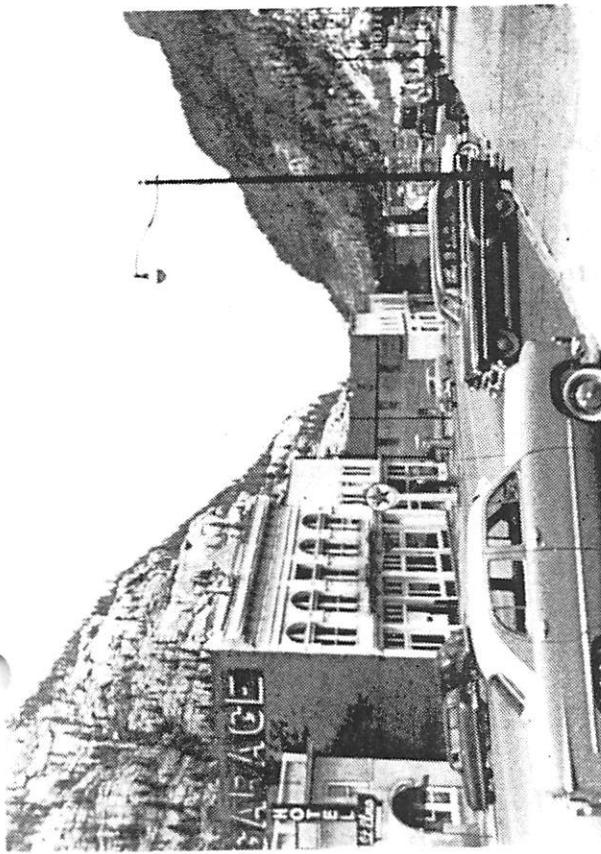
closed—and it seemed too bad for it was beautiful. She found the old Opera House still there—now used for a beautiful photo presentation of the San Juans. But she believed that if you listened closely when things were quiet, the strains of H. M. S. Pinafore might still faintly resound, “at least in one’s memory.”

### 1989 Visit

Following my retirement in 1985, my wife, Helen, and I had made plans to visit the West, including a trip to Ouray. But first my illness and then Helen's progressively delayed our plans. By this time Mary and I were working on a condensation of the memoirs. But when our publisher of choice showed no interest, I returned the original text to the active file of my word processor and began seeking supplemental material. Helen's death in July 1989 brought the idea of a trip into sudden focus—how better to honor her memory than to proceed with the trip we had planned together. By telephone, I located research sources at the Western History Branch of the Denver Public Library, and the Colorado Historical Society as well as individuals in Ouray who were knowledgeable about the history of their town. Helen's cousins in Denver offered me a place to stay. The airlines agreed to assist me at airports. In early September 1989, I flew to Denver, rented a car, spent several days in Denver visiting and researching, and then drove to Ouray.

Ouray had changed in significant ways. There was a bustle of tourists. Even though it was now September, reservations were necessary at most eating places. And these had capitalized on their individual heritages from the wild and woolly days of early Ouray. The old Beaumont Hotel remained boarded up, a ghost of the past. But a profusion of new motels with heated swimming pools and hot tubs had appeared to serve the increasing flow of tourists “discovering” this gem of Southwestern Colorado in the high San Juan mountains.

Another ghost of the past was more disquieting—the remains of the red brick warehouse where my grandfather had directed the outfitting of the pack trains for the trip to the mines high up in the mountains. It had been demolished down to the floor boards that covered its basement. As I poked around, a big

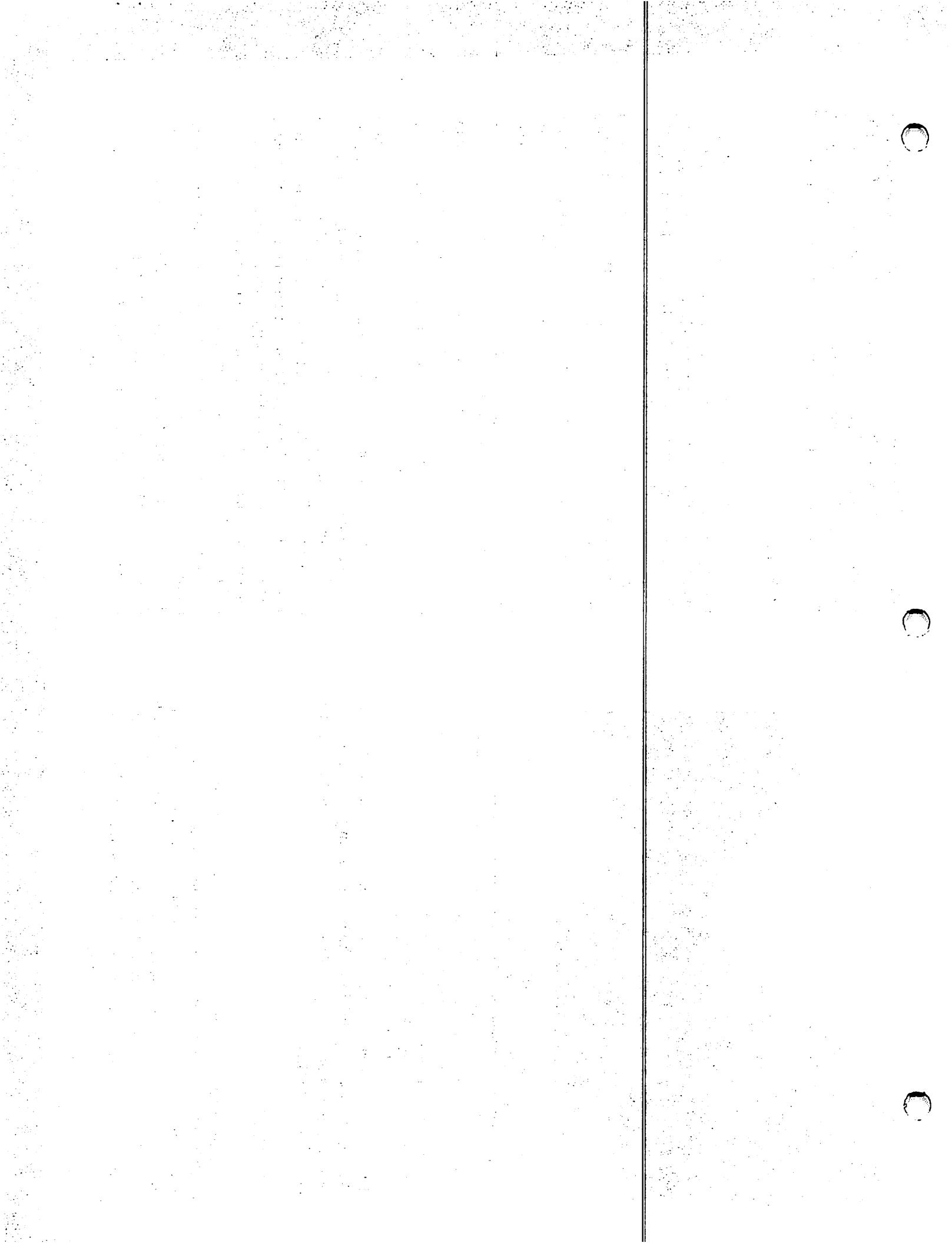


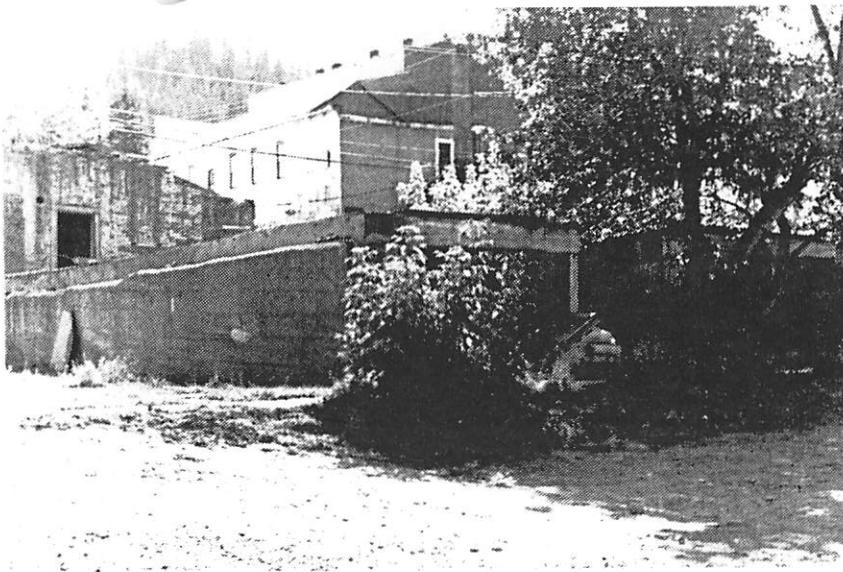
Wright's Hall, the two-story building at the left, was built in 1888 and on the second floor contained the auditorium and stage that provided the “opery” house for which Mrs. Carson and others had agitated. It became the town's early social center, the site for shows by travelling entertainers and local amateur theatricals. In recent years, the auditorium has held a photo presentation of the San Juan mountain area, and the building has been the starting point for scenic Jeep tours. With the high mountains, the sun only reaches this main street for part of the day. (William R. Turner, 1954)

at the local newspaper office. “Leave the memoirs,” they said, “We might consider publishing them.” In ensuing weeks, I began receiving copies of the paper—they published everything that I had released to them!

### 1979 Visit

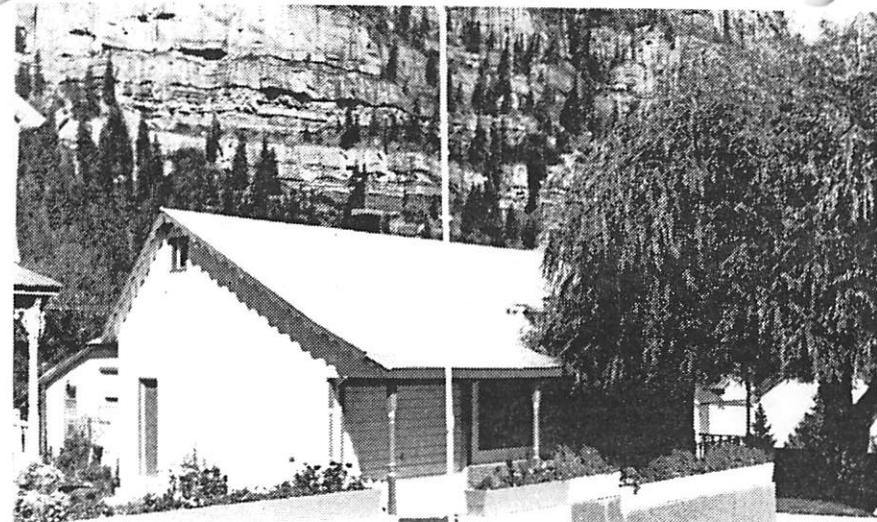
Mary Lou, now married, made her last pilgrimage to Ouray in 1979, also equipped with a color camera. She found that the columbine still bloomed among the aspen, and observed that the sun still warmed only half the town at a time. Red mountain still loomed over forgotten mines on the way to Silverton. The box canyon still hid its raging waterfall. The Beaumont Hotel was





This view of the warehouse as seen in 1989 shows the remains of the foundation walls and the timbering for the first floor. Beyond the warehouse in the center is the back corner of the old Wright's office building, and beyond that the upper floor of Wright's Hall, containing the auditorium, once the opera house, and now the photo presentation of the San Juan mountain area. (William R. Turner, 1989)

alley cat unlimbered itself from a corner in the shadows, decided I would not serve its needs, and disappeared around the corner. Two chipmunks appeared and scolded me for invading their privacy. I crossed the street to where my mother's house had been. A man was watering the yard, and the premises were just as well cared for as I had remembered from my 1954 visit. But the appearance of the house was totally changed. I soon realized that this was the result of facade on the front. I introduced myself, and the man turned out to be a neighbor from across the street, caring for the property during the absence of the owners. Would I like to see inside? I certainly would. With the addition the house provided a very comfortable home with much space for guests. At the basement level, rough-cut foundation stones revealed the extent of the original house, and modern concrete blocks, that of the addition. In this metamorphosis, what was missing was the old bay window where the plants bloomed in the winter and the canary trilled and chirped.



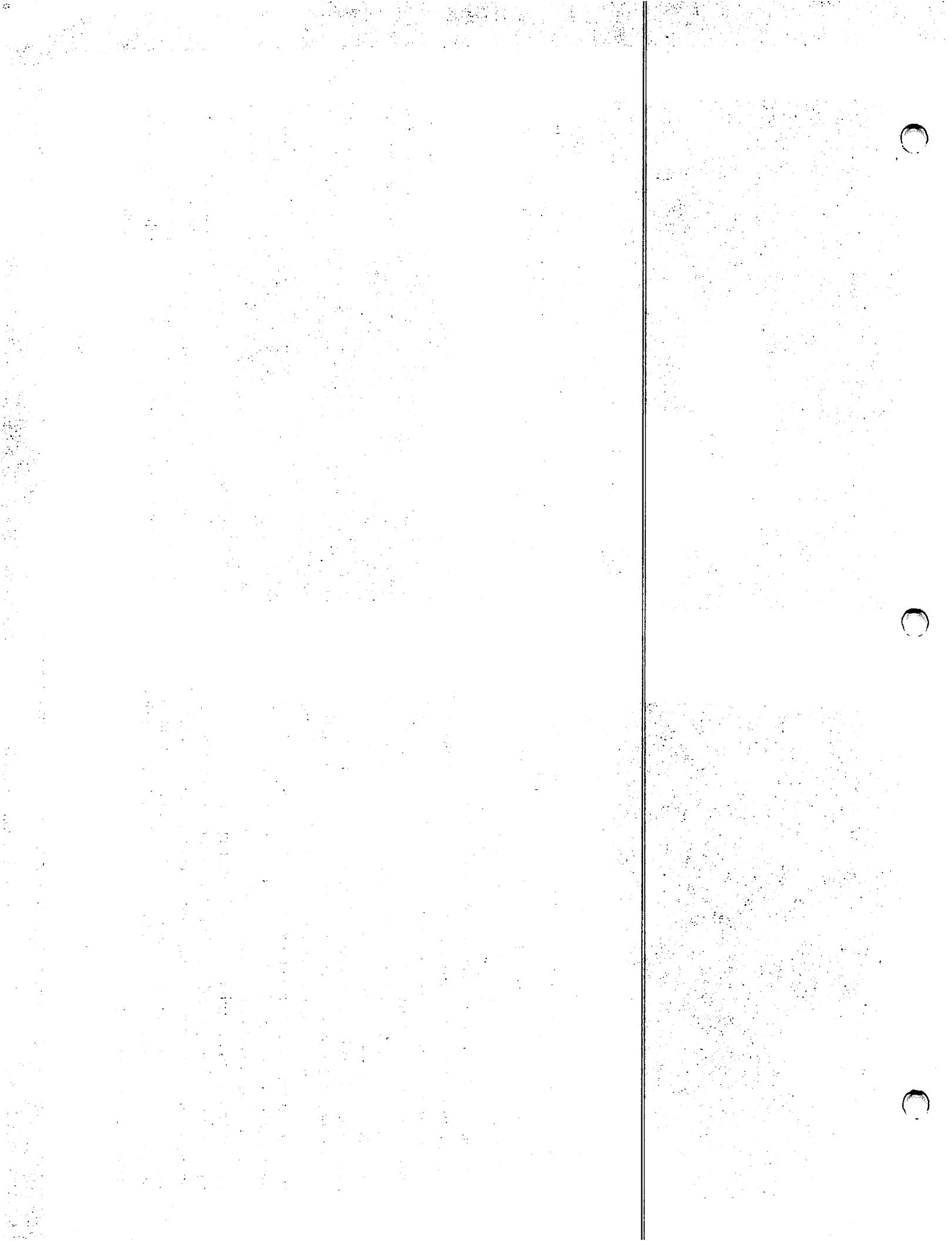
Although the appearance of the old "Block" home shown in the 1954 picture on page 76 is totally changed by the front addition, the result is a very comfortable home with much more space for visitors. Missing, however, in the old bay window on the south side. (William R. Turner, 1989)

## 1990 Visit



Original home of William S. Home (now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Bole Froese) as it appears today (see page 52). It was purchased in 1879 for \$350. (William R. Turner, 1990)

I returned to Ouray in September 1990. By this time *Memoirs of a Happy Childhood* including pictures had taken definitive form. Review copies has been reproduced and sent to knowledgeable individuals in Ouray, and family friends elsewhere for comment.



Goldie & Co owners of the Monongahela Mine  
 H. W. Reed Sept. Virginian Mine  
 D. Chiarler Owner Cimarron  
 Ott Scott Sup & owner Jagged Yellow stone  
 O. Barlow " Calliope Mine  
 G. H. Gaynor, Sept. Justice Day Mine  
 Paramount Bros. owners of Vanderbilt R.M.  
 Sutton Bros. " Dutcher Mine  
 Johnnay Owners Bandit Mine  
 J. L. Dallin of Light Rock Mountain  
 W. S. Corbett Sept. Mineral Farm M. Co.  
 James Lippes Sept. Lippes Mine  
 J. Z. Wright Sept. Keweenaw Mine  
 D. P. Reed Sept. Porchelle Mine  
 W. S. Home " Gipsey Mine

Signature page of petition to DR&G Railroad asking that the railroad be extended into Ouray. W. S. Home's signature is at lower left. (Marvin Gregory from the Reed Letters)

One of the reviewers, Dr. Doris Gregory, had identified for me the present owners of the old William S. Home residence in Ouray as Mr. and Mrs. Bole Froese. In conversation with Mr. Froese I learned many details of Home's early activities in Ouray. The Froese family is restoring this old house with the desire to register it as a historic site. The house had been built in the 1877-78 period by G. A. Brown who later became owner of the Dixon House in 1883. Home had purchased the property in January 1879 for \$350 and immediately set about improving it, adding a front facade and a barn. Then in 1879 he almost lost the property in a lawsuit. More improvements were made in 1882.

Home had purchased a number of lots bordering on the alley east of the Beaumont Hotel and built several storage sheds. Un-

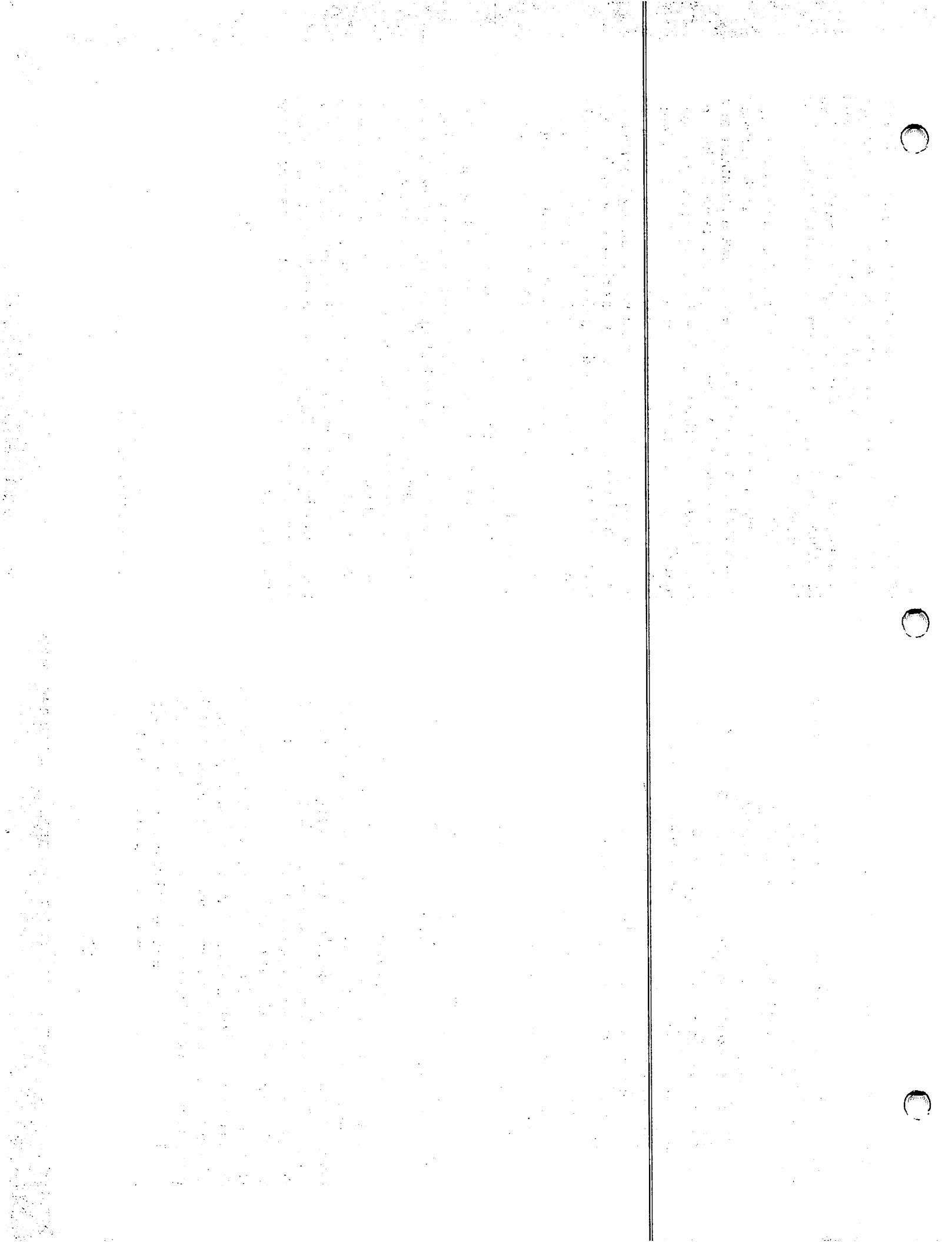
doubtedly some of these were used to store the dynamite he sold to the mines. Advertisements in local newspapers of the day, found by Mr. Froese, described the business of the Home and Company as the sale of miner's supplies, groceries, clothing, furnishings, and shoes. The company was also the "sole agent" for the American Powder Company.

William S. Home was active in the business affairs of Ouray. Doris Gregory reports in her recent book<sup>14</sup> that as the railroad approached Ouray, David Day sought to have it terminate at a town he was promoting north of Ouray called Ramona. This was at the time the new Beaumont Hotel was approaching completion. Ouray businessmen were up in arms. W. S. Home's signature appeared on a 1886 petition to David H. Moffat, President of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad explaining the need for the railroad to terminate in Ouray as close as possible to the mines. After meeting with a delegation of businessmen Moffat changed his mind on July 24, 1886 and agreed to build the railroad into Ouray provided that the businessmen furnished the right-of-way and paid for the necessary grading. This they did, thereby killing the town of Ramona.

Before I left Ouray, I decided to take one last look at the remains of the old red warehouse at Second Street and Fifth Avenue. To my astonishment, it was gone. All that remained was a pile of bricks and a new wall along the property line. Ouray is a town of stark contrasts. The relatively new county historical society has taken over the old hospital and is busily preserving examples of the town as it was one hundred years ago. A mine works has been reconstructed in the basement. Eighty per cent of the town's buildings would probably qualify as historic sites. Yet the first brick building to be constructed in the town has been demolished without a marker, or sign telling of its place in the town's history.

WRT

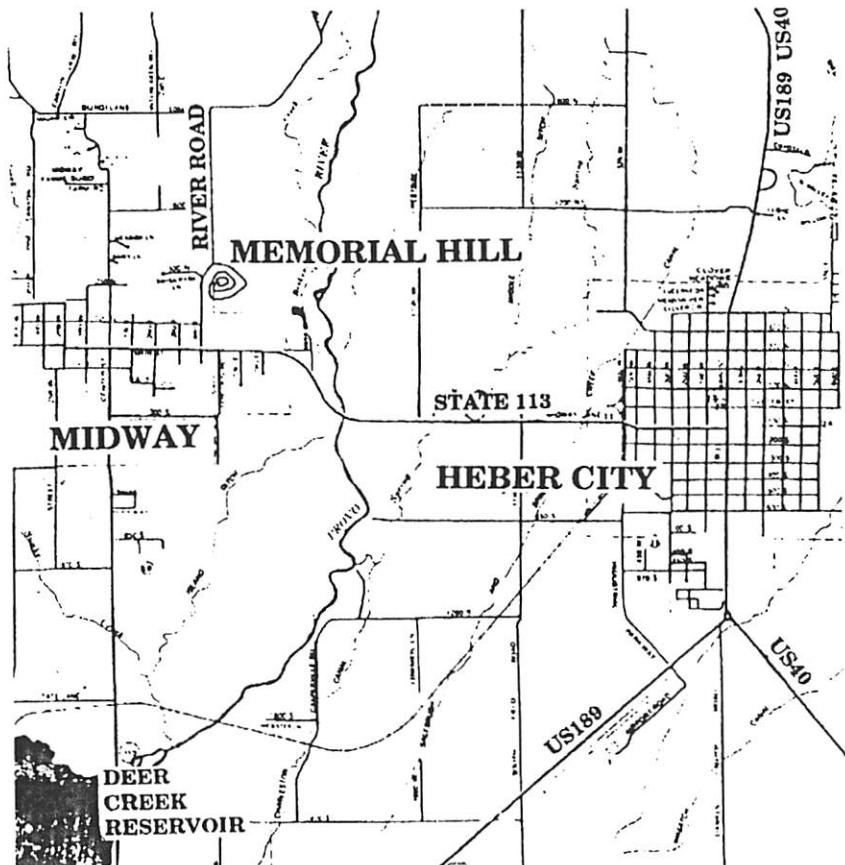
<sup>14</sup>"The Fight to Save Ouray and the Beaumont," page 32, *Ouray's Beaumont Hotel*, Doris H. Gregory. (Ref. 10)



## ADDENDUM C

### The Memorial Hill Development

On Armistice Day, 1928, 1500 people gathered on a prominent, 300 foot high hillock on the boundary between the communities of Heber and Midway, Utah, to dedicate a permanent monument honoring Wasatch County residents who had served

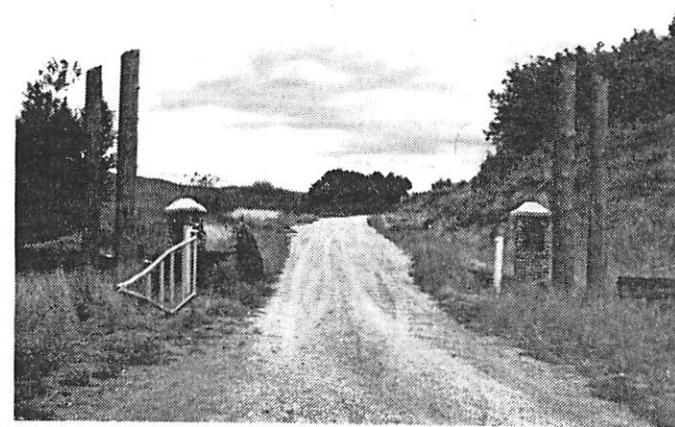


in American wars. Leigh Block Turner was the architect and designer.

At the time I was eight years old and not conscious of this undertaking. Had this project been undertaken at home as were later commissions, my innate curiosity would have kept me fully

informed. But my mother still had her civil engineering office downtown in Salt Lake City with its large drafting tables, and that was where the work was done. Thus, as I picked through an old envelope of clippings this past winter (1989-90), I took great interest in a clipping labelled Heber (Utah) with the headline "Legion Unveils Unique Shaft." Upon reading further I learned that my mother had been the architect and designer. One of my mother's unfortunate habits was her failure to note on clippings either their source or date! As a result I remained mystified about the time period of this work until a series of articles was found in an old Heber newspaper by a Midway family interested in the me-

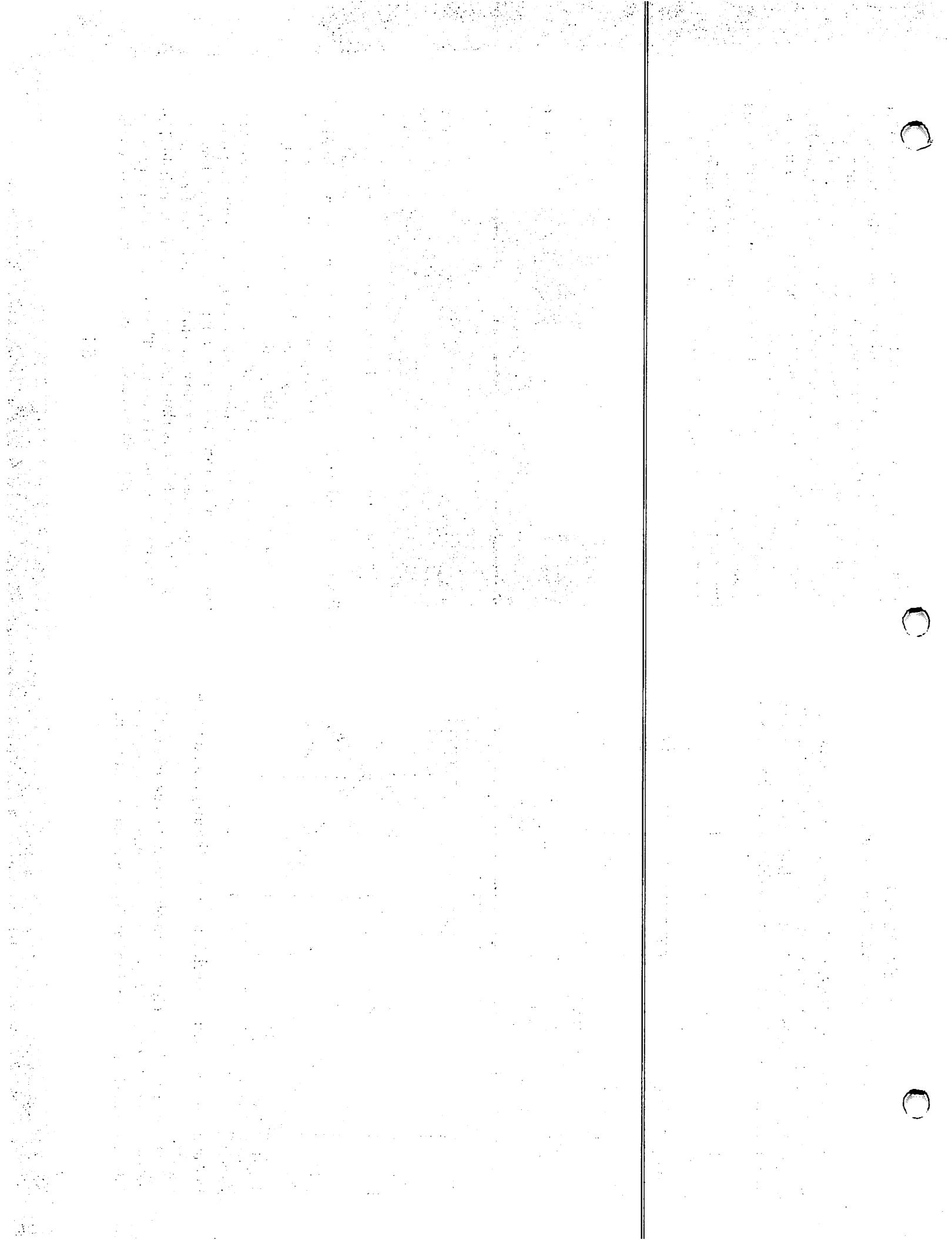
orial. I photocopied the original undated family clipping and added it to the folder of matters to investigate on my forthcoming 1990 trip West. However, I did telephone an old friend



Entrance to Memorial Hill. (William R. Turner, 1990)

from childhood, Dick Thiriot, who has a summer home in Midway. Yes, he told me, the hill is prominent—you can't miss it, and while you are in the vicinity take a look at my place—it has a railroad running around the yard.

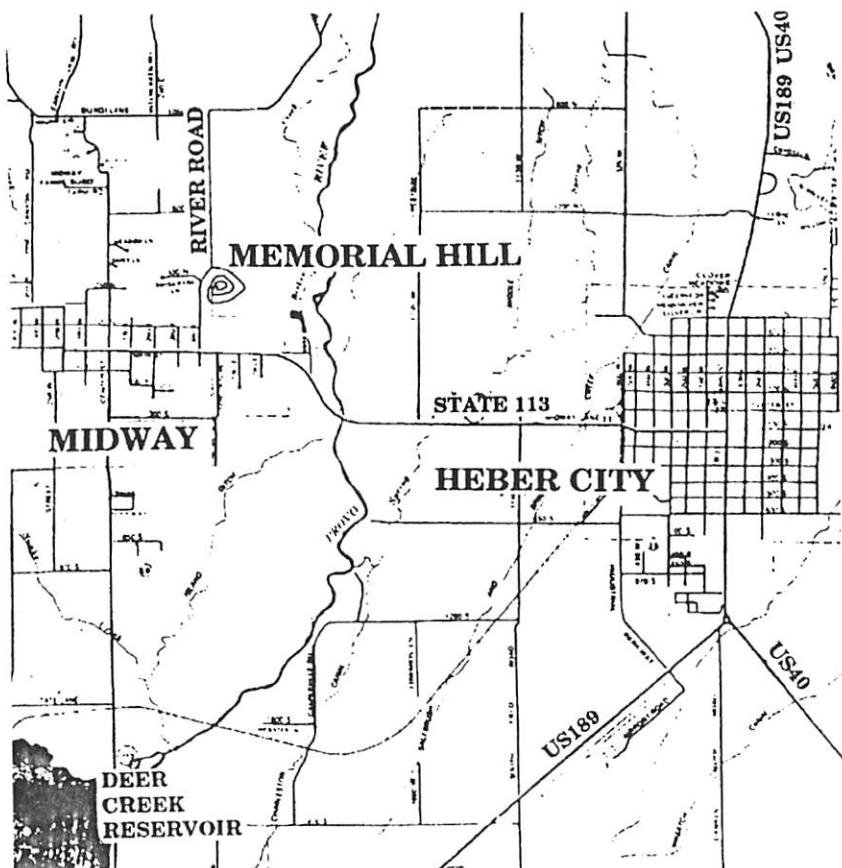
In September 1990 I picked up another family friend, Martha Shack, for the ride to Heber and Midway. We easily found the entrance to Memorial Hill, as the hill is now called, and drove up the one and one-quarter mile road that circled three times to the top where it ends in a parking plaza the size of a football field. The monument was sited at one end. The road up had been recently graded and the grounds were well kept. But as we approached the



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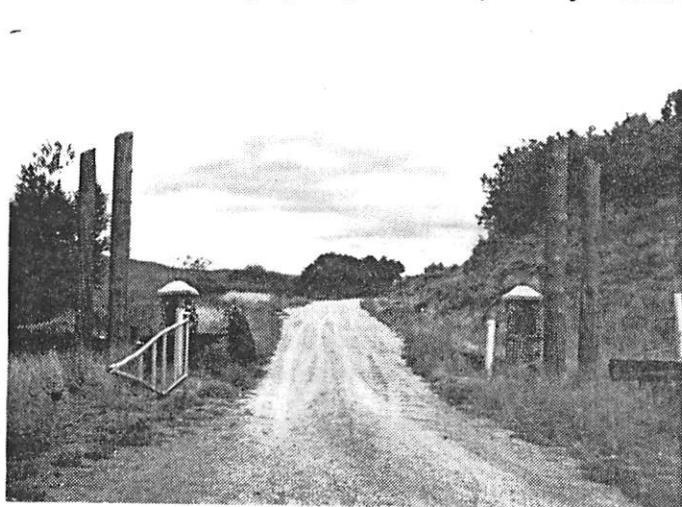
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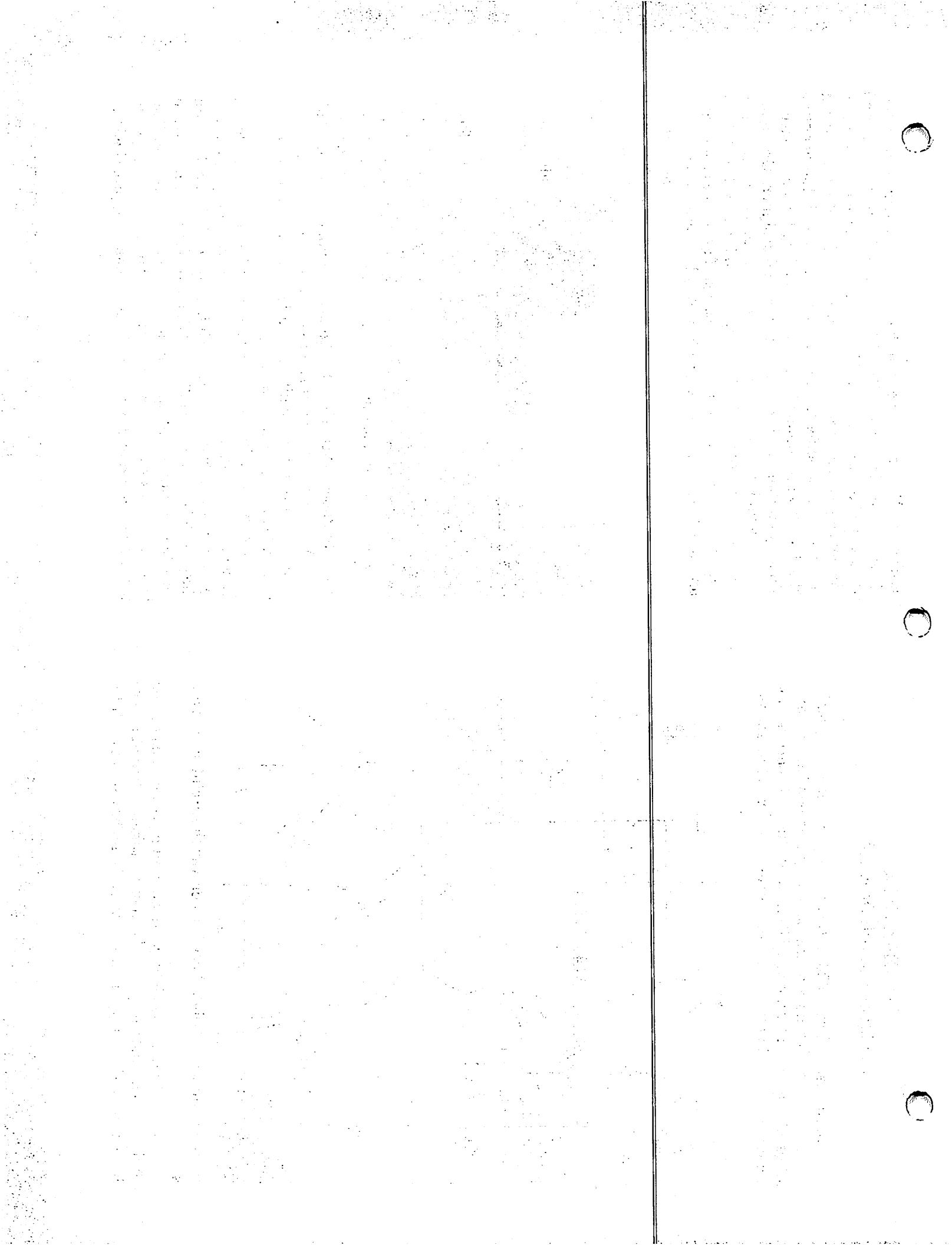


Entrance to Memorial Hill. (William R. Turner, 1990)

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Vacant plaque opening now decorated with a spray paint rendering. Note holes where stolen plaque had been fastened. (William R. Turner, 1990)

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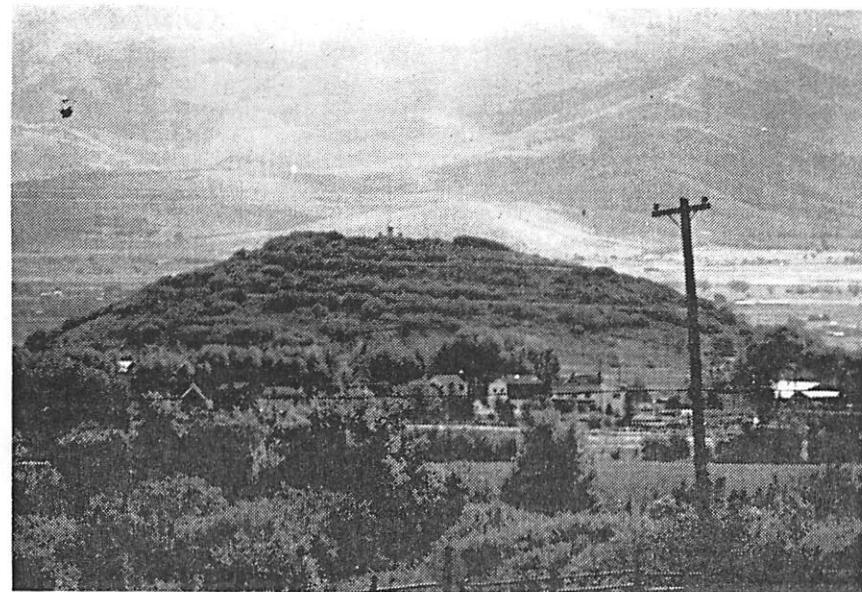
Meanwhile, my further search through the envelopes that held old family photographs turned up three early pictures of the monument. My calls to the National Archives yielded the knowledge that the various American wars had been treated differently by each of the military services, but that in each case the National Archives was the final repository. No casualty lists existed at the

monument, we were aghast. The bronze tablets that had carried Veterans' names were missing. Only holes remained in the masonry where the plates had been attached.

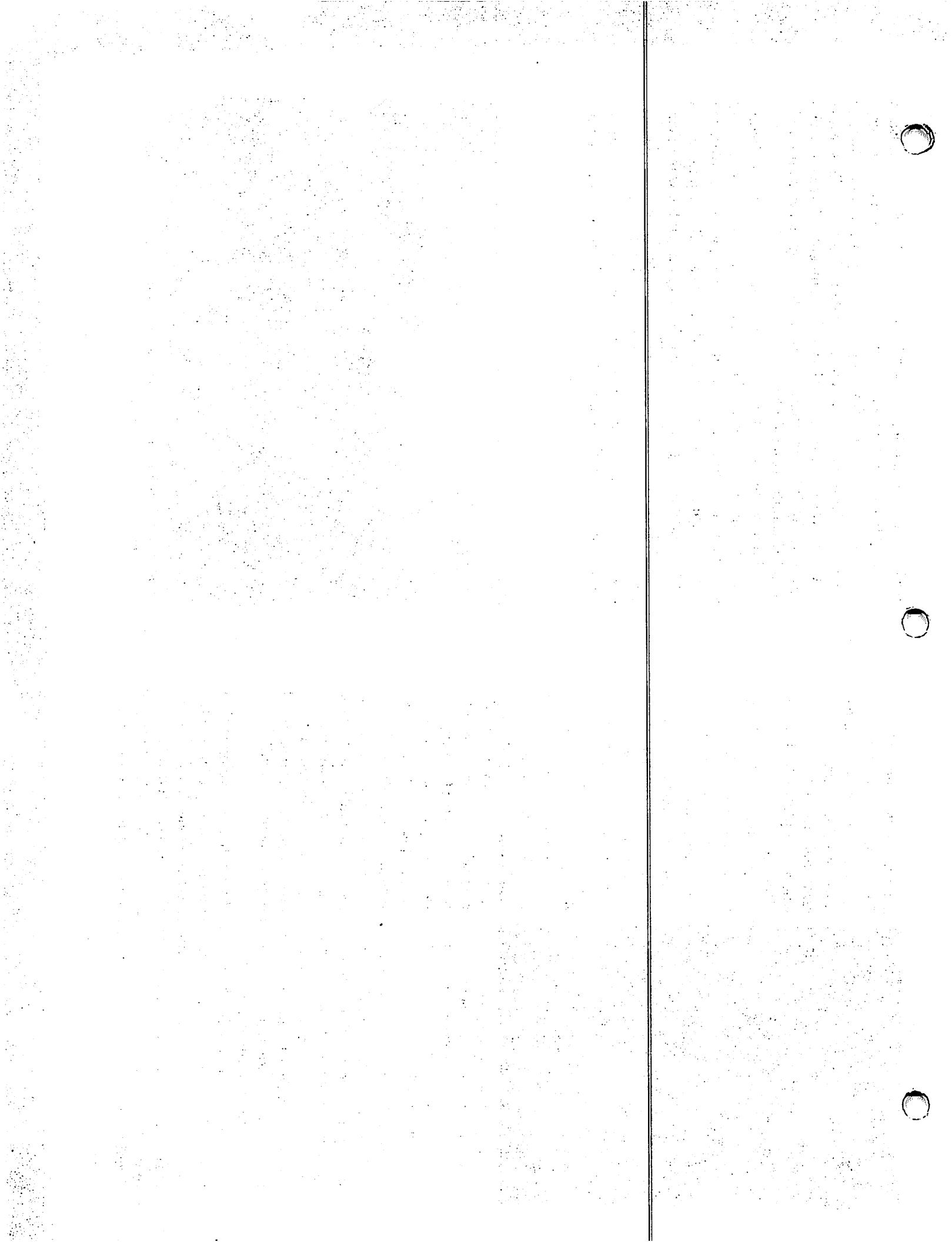
Back home in Maryland I sought answers by telephone. Who better to query than a local librarian? It was late in the week and my first call to the Wasatch County library in Heber was answered by a young substitute librarian who wrote a detailed note to the head librarian who I reached the next Monday. Mrs. Erlys MacNaughton gave me two names, one a local physician who was writing a history of Wasatch County, and the other, a resident with a home near the base of the

Archives for wars prior to the "Great War"—World War I. Each casualty list was compiled by a particular service in its own way. While all were broken down by state, only a few were further sorted by Counties. I was sent a number of different lists. Most of these were photocopies of typed documents. I received the Army list for WWI on microfilm from a book Daniel was later able to get through his local library.

Meanwhile Daniel and his wife had been seeking information through the Mormon Church's genealogy services and had searched the microfilms of an old county newspaper, *The Wasatch Wave*. From one source or another, these efforts paid off. A preliminary listings of names on the original plates was uncovered in the May 25, 1928 issue of *The Wasatch Wave*, placed there for the purpose of allowing residents to verify the list. These lists covered four wars: the Indian War, the Civil War, the Spanish American War, and the first World War. Casualty lists are now



Memorial Hill from a distance showing spiral road and monument in plaza at the top. (William R. Turner, 1990)





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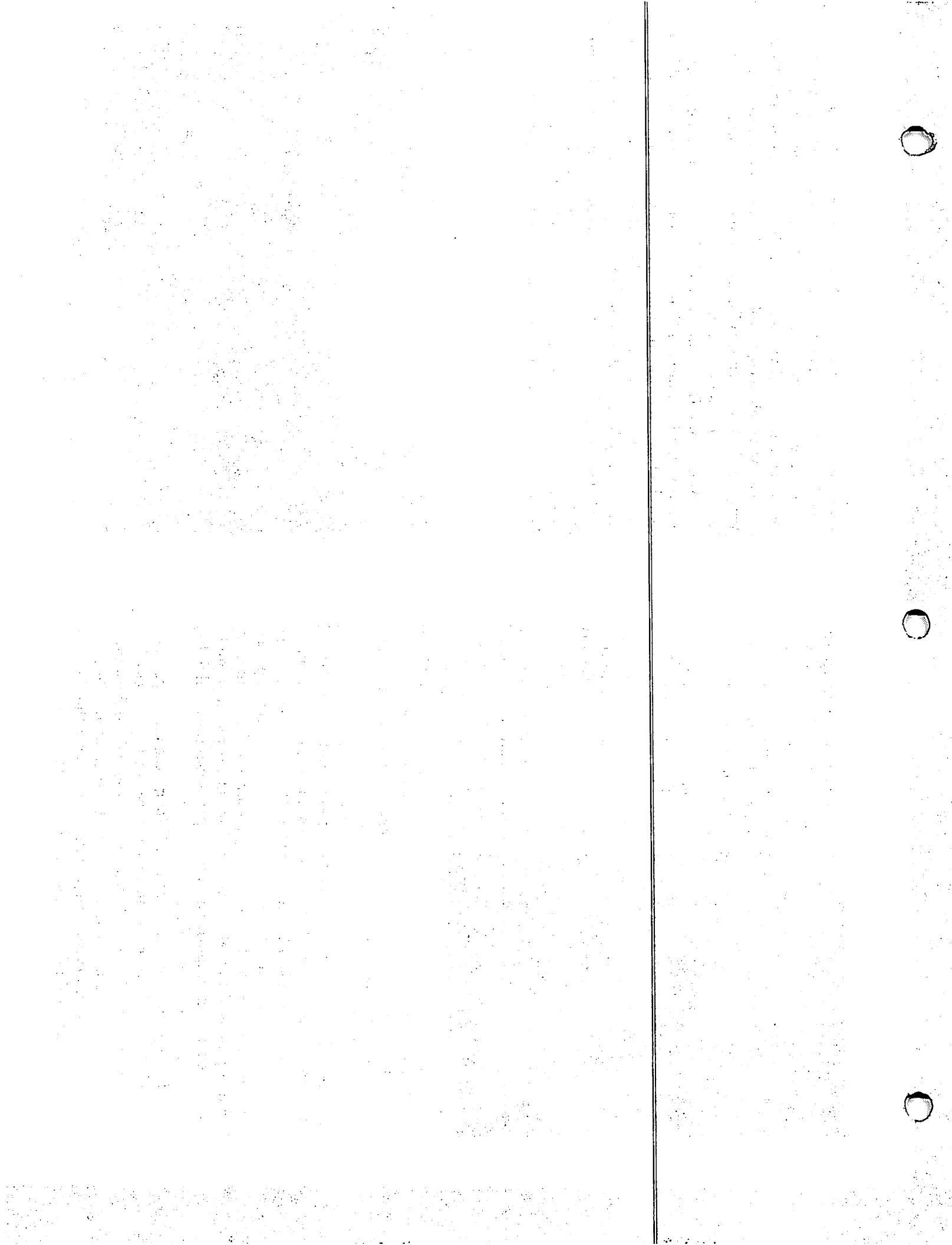
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Memorial Hill from a distance showing spiral road and monument in plaza at the top. (William R. Turner, 1990)





Leigh Block Turner in about 1930 standing beside the monument she designed. (Block-Turner collection)

encountered which was beyond the road building capability of Legion members. Their activity, never-the-less, had aroused much community interest. A group of citizens requested the Wasatch County Commissioners to provide financial assistance. This could not be done under existing state law. There followed meetings with the county's delegation to the State Legislature who after due consideration agreed to seek the enactment of a law granting the authority for any Utah county to levy a county wide tax not to exceed one-half mil per year for special projects such as Memorial Hill.

On April 1, 1927 with funding authority in place, a Memorial Hill committee was formed representative of the various interested communities and organizations in the County. The first step was the placing of a contract for an 18 foot wide roadway to

additionally available for World War II, Vietnam, and Korea, but not complete listings of all participants.

### History of Memorial Hill

The hillock is an isolated mound more or less hemispherical in shape. The idea to use this hill as a memorial site appears to have arisen in 1923 from a suggestion by Bishop Joseph C. McDonald of the local Mormon Church to the Lockhart Post #23 of the American Legion. The Legion proceeded to purchase the land and attempt construction of an auto road to the top. Before this road was one-third completed, however, heavy rock was

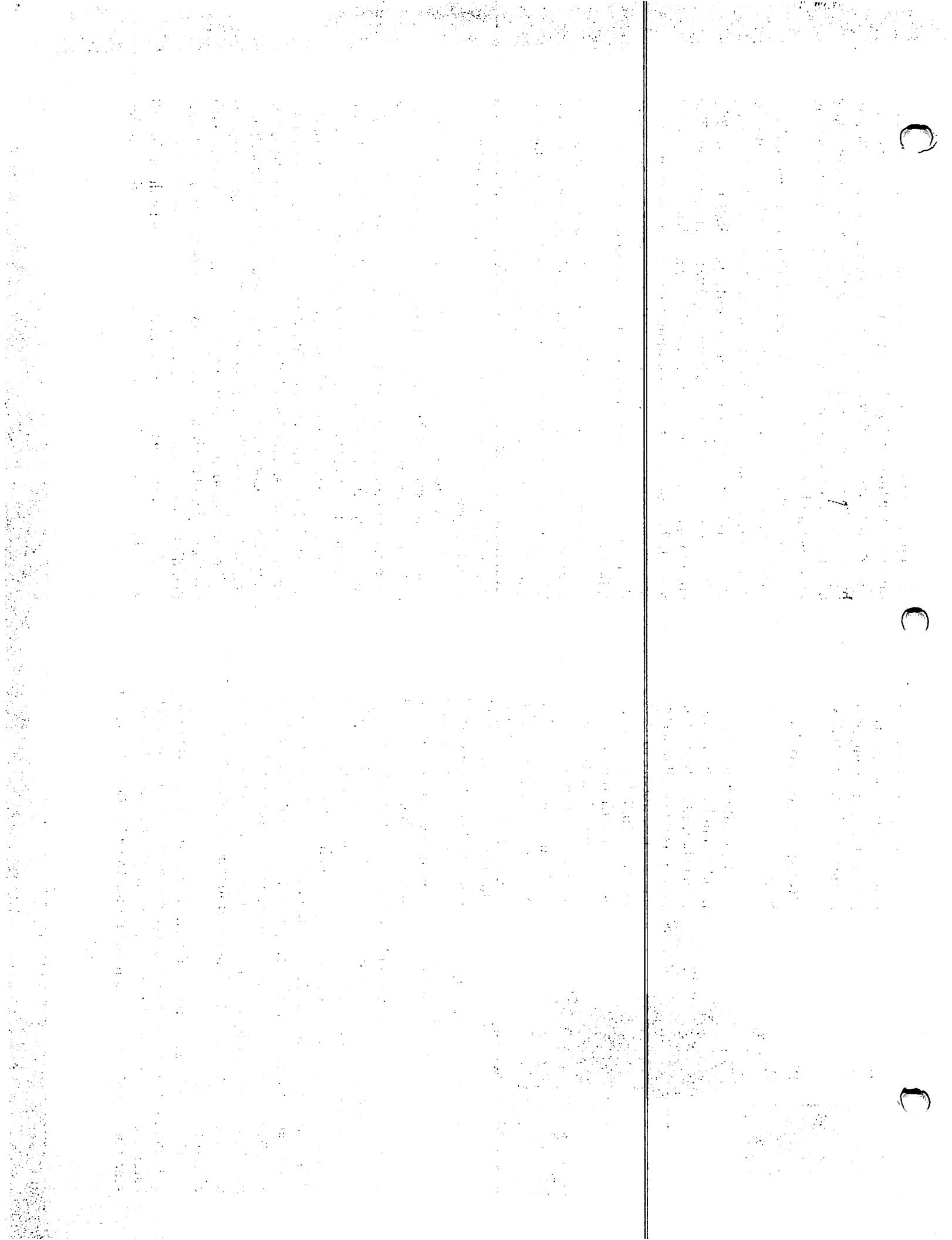
the top of the hill, ending in a parking plaza. A road survey had already been financed by the Park Utah Mine and undertaken by the county surveyor. A contract for a fence was placed, followed by one for the monument proper with the Capital Brass Company of Salt Lake City, Leigh Block Turner being designated as the architect and designer.

By May 28, 1928, the Memorial Hill committee had assembled the proposed name list of Wasatch County veterans for public inspection and this had been published in *The Wasatch Wave*, as previously noted. In the July 13, 1928 issue of *The Wave*, completion of the work during 1928 was predicted. The spiral road was cut, but not yet covered by a substantial layer of gravel. The design of the monument was being worked out by Mrs. Turner in collaboration with Arthur C. Moulton, manager of the brass company. A description of the monument was given as follows:

The monument was to be built around the base of the bronze flagpole which had already been placed. A circular concrete base, 37 feet in diameter, was to be poured for the structure. One and a half feet back from the edge of this base a scallop-top wall will form the backrest for observation seating facing outward around the entire base except for two spaces where steps would lead up from the ground.

In the center of the base and surrounding the flagpole will be a hexagonal shaft 16 feet high and five feet in diameter of white cast stone finished with concrete. At the base of the shaft will be placed a circular concrete seat, and below that a vertical cobblestone wall. On one of the six faces of the shaft will be an inscription telling the general purpose of the monument and on each of the other five was to be inscribed in bronze letters the names of those from Wasatch County who served in the various American wars. The top of the hexagonal shaft will be dome shaped, surrounded by an ornamental brass flagpole base. Total height to the top of the flagpole will be 55 feet. Six bronze spires will be mounted at the outer edge of the base to correspond with the six angles of the hexagonal column. These will carry 500 watt floodlights to illuminate the shaft, the flagpole and the flag.

At the entrance to the drive on the Northwest side of the hill will be two cobblestone, cement finished piers made to match





Leigh Block Turner in about 1930 standing beside the monument she designed. (Block-Turner collection)

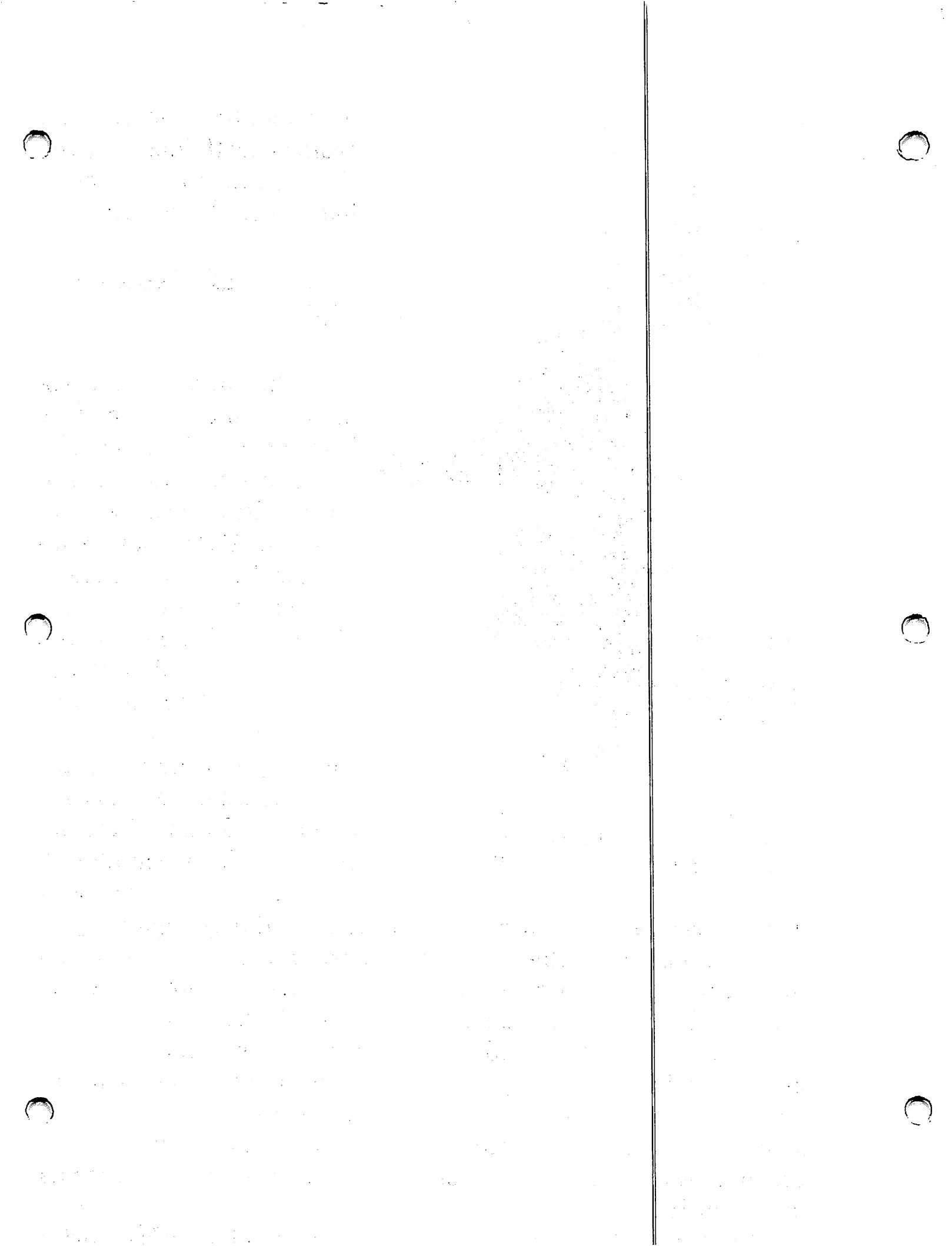
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the lower section of the main shaft on top of the hill. Bronze plates on the piers will identify the road as being the way to Memorial Hill. Each pier will carry a frosted glass globe containing a light.

A further article in *The Wasatch Wave* of November 16, 1928 noted that the total cost of the memorial was approximately \$10,000 and that replacement bronze plates would be made up and mounted in several months to correct errors and omissions made on those now in place.

## Vandalism and Erosion

Vandalism became an immediate hazard for this isolated monument. The first objects to go were the glass globes mounted on the piers at the road entrance. These were soon followed by the floodlights mounted on the brass spires surrounding the hexagonal shaft. Makeshift lighting was then mounted at the top of the shaft below the flagpole base. These lighting fixtures were also damaged at various times. The flagpole ropes themselves were regularly cut.

Two forms of erosion plagued the monument. First, drainage down the bronze flagpole carried metal salts that stained the hex-

agonal column. Second, temperature changes and freezing loosened the cobble stones below the seat around the central column and on the entrance piers. Many fell out.

Thus, in 1984, the



Refurbished monument, but without plaques. (William R. Turner, 1990)

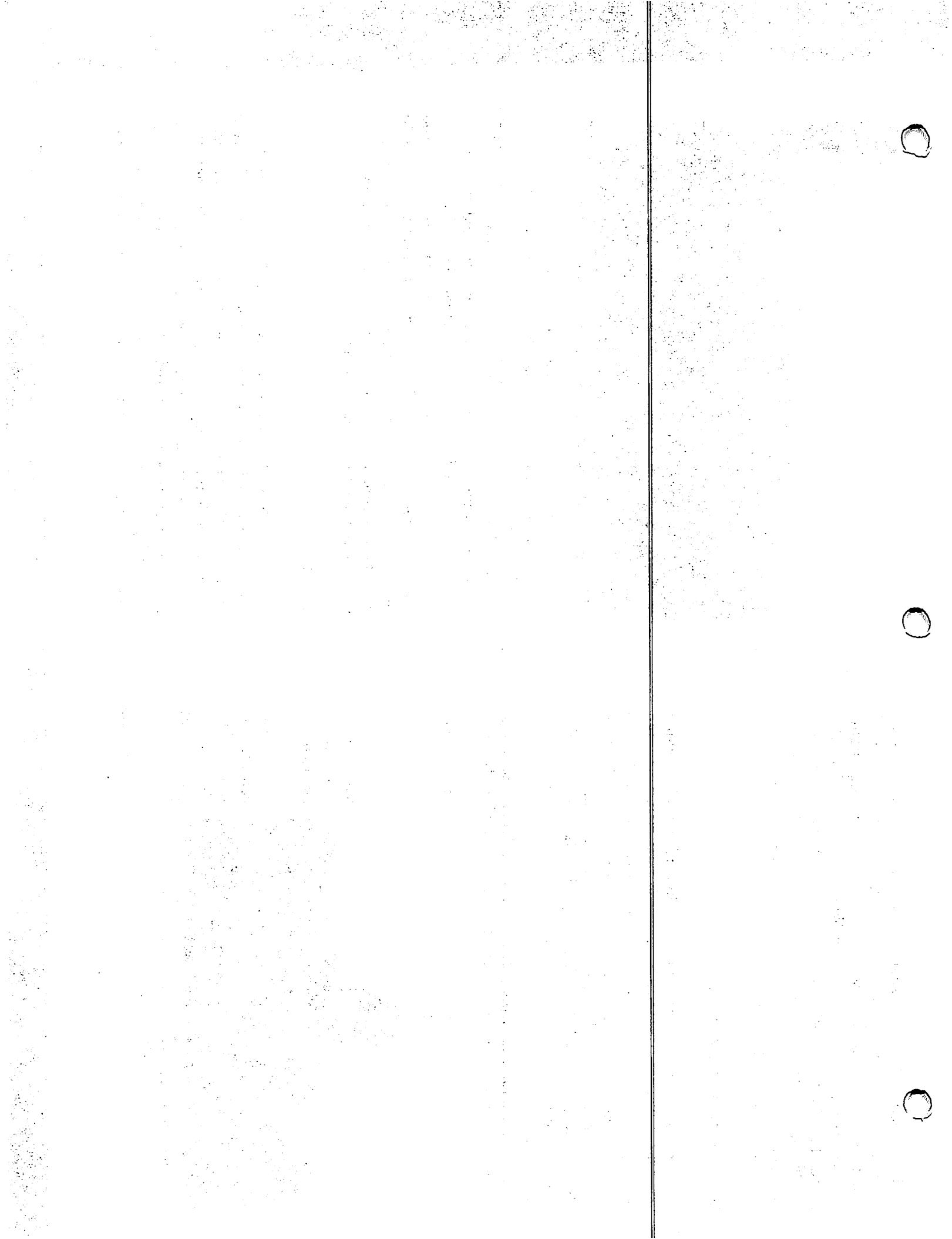


Memorial Hill provides an unparalleled panoramic view of the Heber basin. The City is in the immediate distance. (William R. Turner, 1990)

Wasatch County Commissioners undertook a major restoration of the memorial. The bronze flagpole was replaced with one of aluminum. The major surfaces of the memorial subject to erosion were replaced with erosion resistant, native masonry. In the process six piers were added at the edge of the concrete base to receive future plaques. The lighting was transferred to a high pole at the edge of the parking area. But just as the improvements were completed, the bronze plaques were stolen.

## The Future

The Midway Boosters' Club has adopted Memorial Hill as a special project for its members. An important administrative step by the County Commissioners is the incorporation of Memorial Hill into the County's Park and Recreation System. Water will be piped to the top of the hill for more extensive landscaping. Boy Scout projects are being proposed to beautify Memorial Hill. With the development of recreational facilities, a wider group of County residents are expected to take an interest in this community

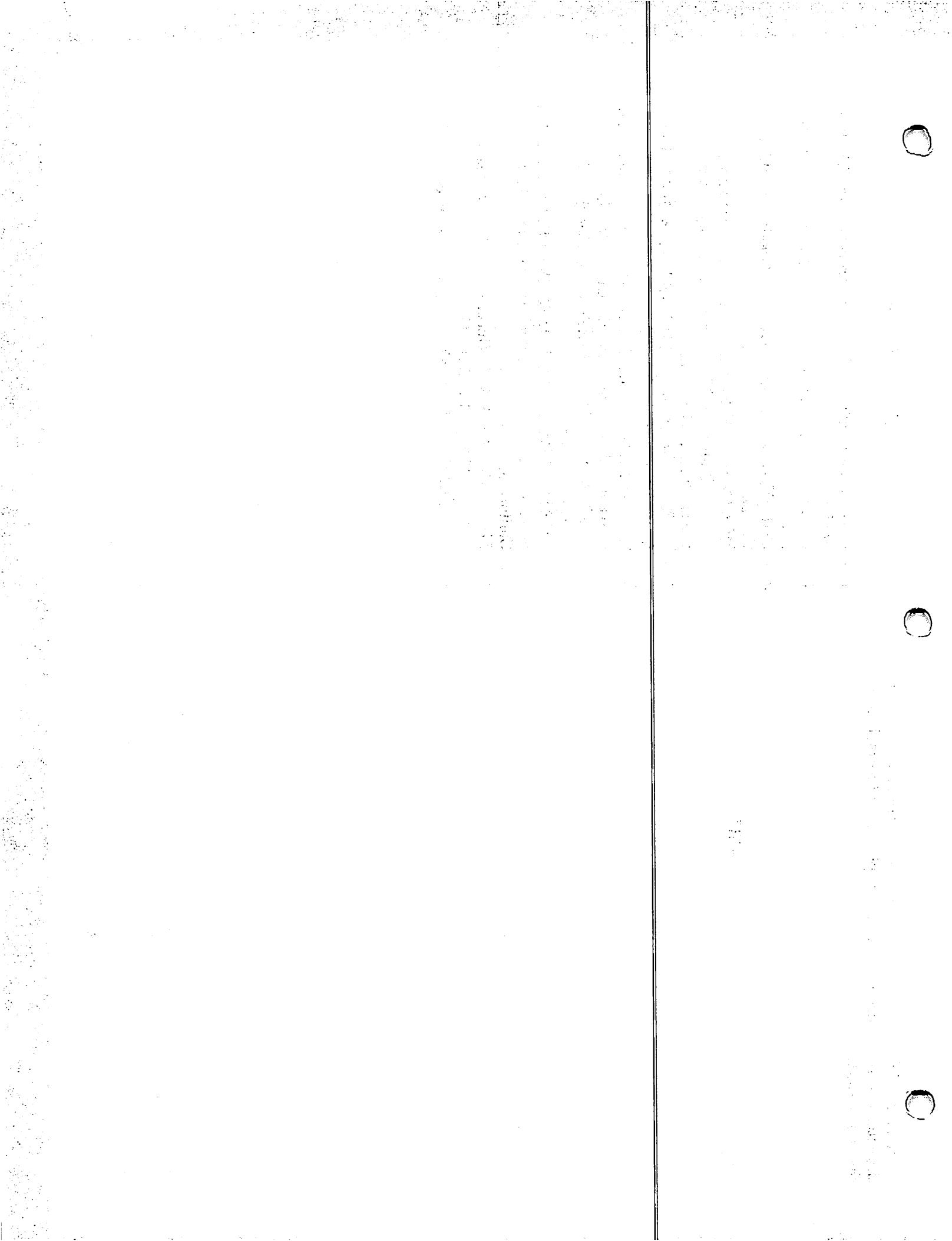


asset. And the County Commissioners are determined to resolve the veterans' name question so that new plates can be cast before the end of 1991.

WRT

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Leigh Block Turner wrote this memoir and gave the story its name. No record exists of the various friends who sat by her hospice bed, wrote down her words when she could no longer write, and took various sections home for typing.

Once I had compiled a consistent text and Ditto'd it for family use, my sister, Dr. Mary Lou Haanes, did the first fine editing and researched the few discrepancies that became apparent.

The 1990-91 version was thoroughly edited as to punctuation and English usage by Virginia Wolf of Columbia, Maryland and Jessica Perry of Tucson, Arizona. My daughter, Barbara Leigh McDonald of Laurel, Maryland gave the subheadings special attention.

Dr. William Fairweather of Akron, Ohio, filled in details on his mother, Jess Home Fairweather, as did Amy Leigh McClellan of San Diego, California, on her father, William H. Block.

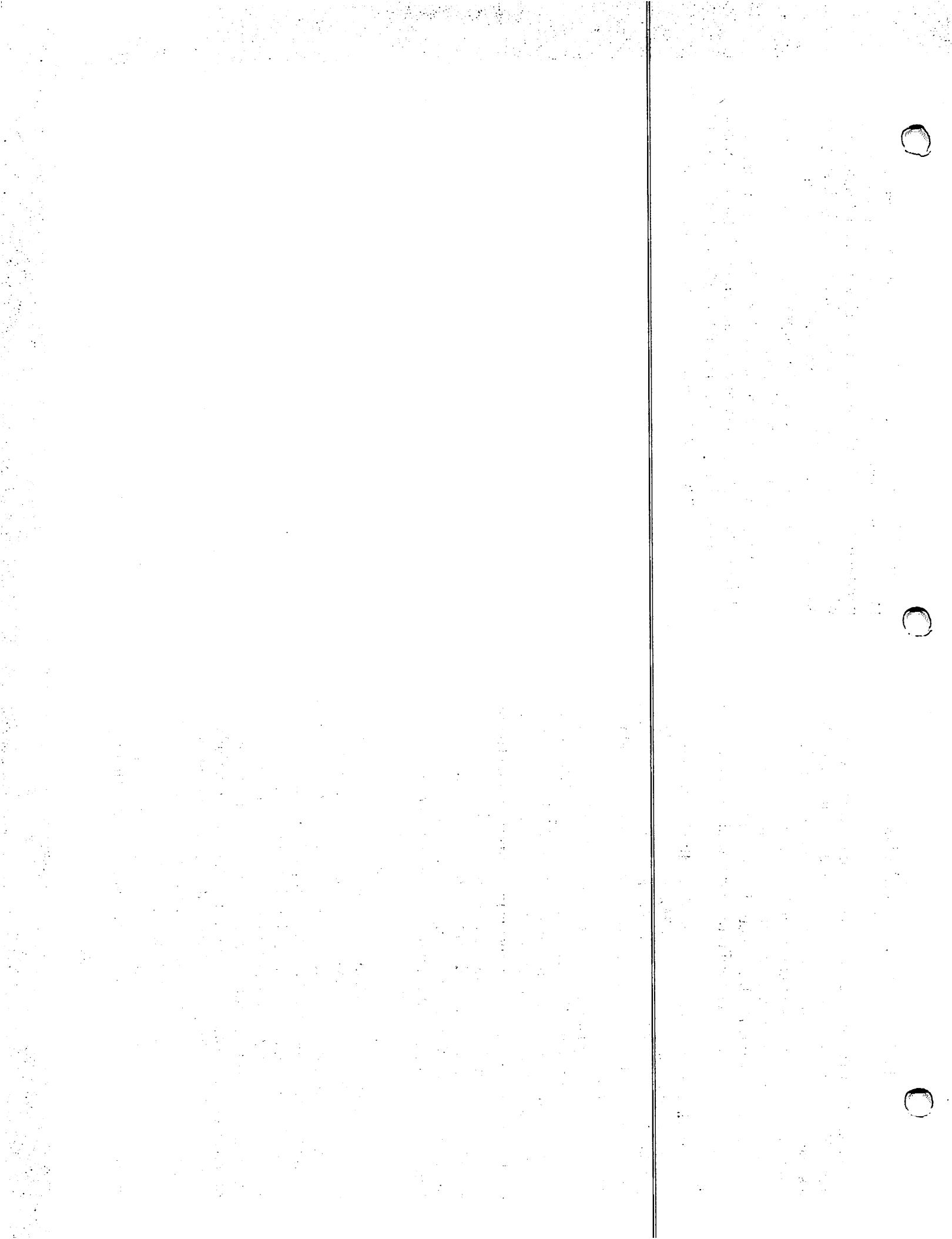
In Ouray, Colorado, Dr. Doris Gregory was instrumental in tracking down facts about a number of incidents mentioned in the Memoirs, and in finding additional pictures of the period. She placed me in contact with Bole Froese who shared with me his research into the W. S. Home family. Marvin Gregory and Vera Bemseth reviewed the 1989-90 text and noted inconsistencies, providing many comments that allowed the text to be supplemented with footnotes. Fredric O. Kirk escorted me through the old Block residence to see changes in the foundation between the original building and the several additions. Jack Benham and Jack Swanson discussed with me the hazards of the small book business and advised that I attempt self publication.

In Denver I am indebted to the librarians at the Western History Branch of the Denver Public Library and the Colorado Historical Society for laying before me their respective collections of Ouray pictures, enabling me to enrich this book pictorially. In addition, Rebecca Lintz at the Historical Society found interest in the Society's publication group for possible use of a condensed version on the memoirs in a Society journal.

From Salt Lake City, Martha Shack has, over the years, supplied many documents on my mother's activities there.

In Heber City, Utah, the county librarian, Mrs. Erlys MacNaughton responded to my cry for help about the missing monument plates by placing me in touch with Daniel Ballstaedt who with his wife ran down articles on the early history of Memorial Hill, and County Commissioner Pete Coleman who filled me in on current plans for improving Memorial Hill and replacing the stolen name plaques.

During the early period of work on this project Barbara Maloney of Dayton, Maryland copied many of the old photographs used so that the originals could be safeguarded. Later this copying work was done by Photo-Tech of Olney, Maryland.



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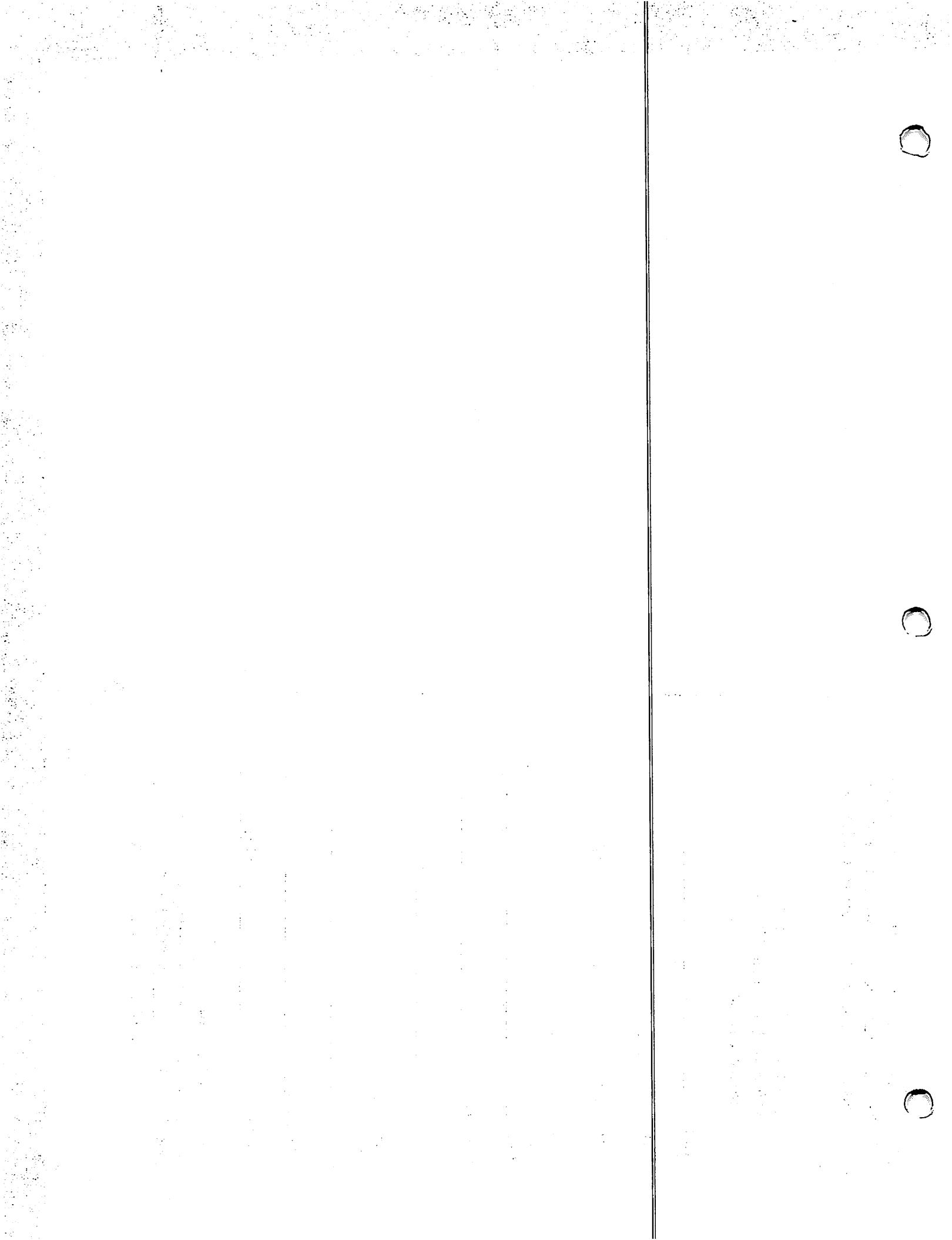
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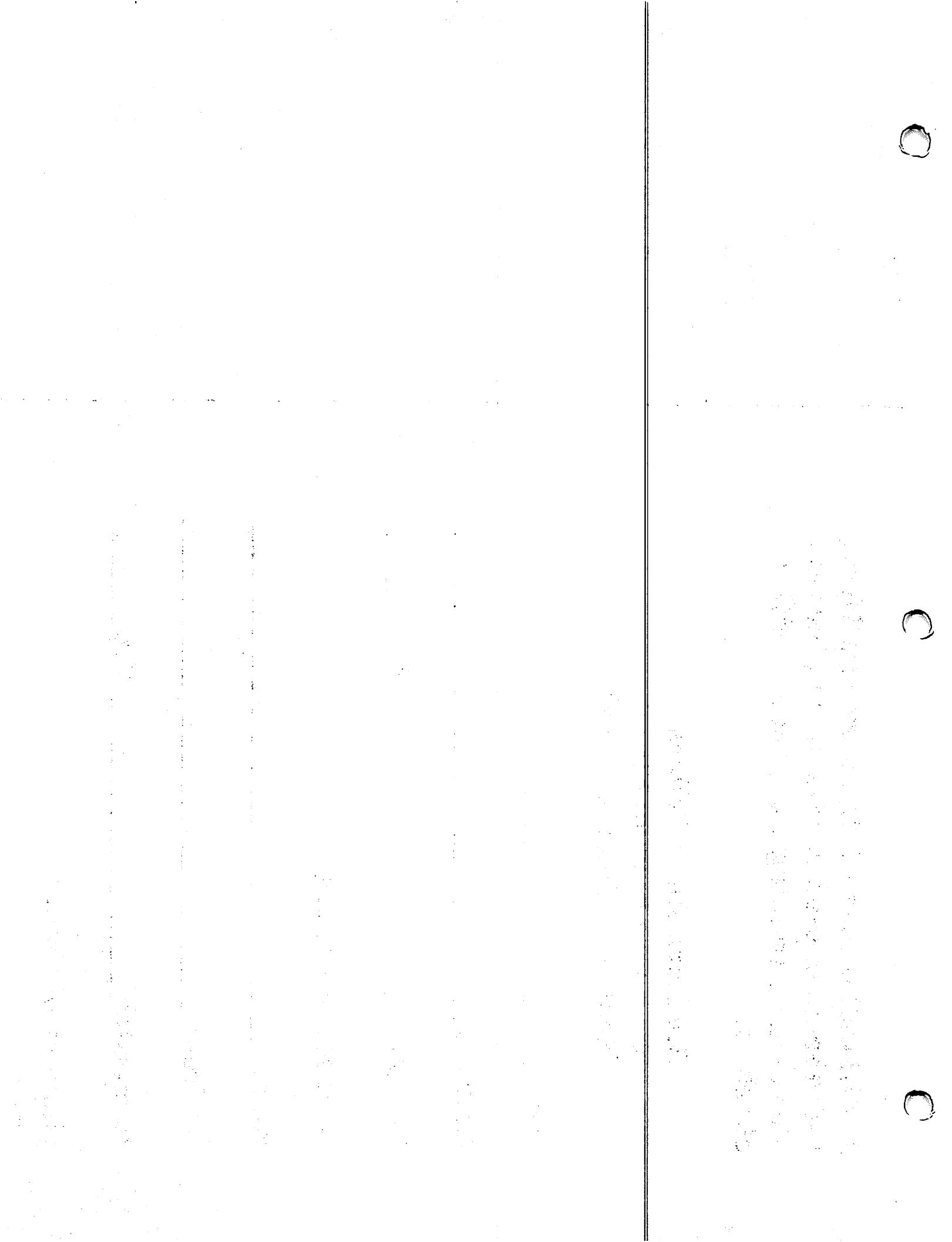
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